



*The
Log House
Club*
by
Robert Eggert

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P R E F A C E

ONE half century has elapsed since Fort Sumter was fired upon and the Civil War began. This war closed four years thereafter with the surrender of the Confederate forces to the Union, and with the assurance of the complete expulsion of slavery from the United States.

The North and the South paid dearly for the verification of the principle that liberty and slavery cannot exist at the same time in one and the same nation; and that the existence of the one is the death of the other.

The recollection of the magnitude of the price paid is still fresh in the minds of those steadily decreasing old veterans who, once a year, decorate the graves of their comrades. The last of those veter-

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ans must soon join the grand army of the dead, while the present generation, in their chase after the golden calf, are apt to forget the sacrifices their fathers made in order to cut out slavery from the body politic and, for the first time in the history of the world, to establish a republic in which complete liberty, freed from caste, rules supreme.

The civilized world was amazed that from the purely artisan and farming population of the North such vast armies could have been created as were necessary to suppress the most formidable revolution known to history.

From the foregoing facts sprang a desire on the part of several old veterans to retain from that creative period of our nation a few episodes which would portray the methods that had been pursued, describe the actors who had aided to shift the scenery in that bloody drama, honor the dead that had fallen on the ramparts,

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and send to the present generation the watchword of the old guard:—

“Slavery in a different form has since shown its murderous instincts; Tyranny has shot down among us, without the remotest right or excuse for the murder, the peace-loving, law-abiding citizen who had lawfully sold his labor to an employer against whom a self-constituted court of employees had pronounced the ban, now called the ‘boycott.’ Tyranny has further destroyed, unlawfully and viciously, the property of the boycotted as punishment for having exercised his constitutional right of hiring labor where he could lawfully find it. Attention! Haul down that flag of modern slavery and its associates, and guard well the Goddess of Liberty whose purple has been cleansed with the blood of your fathers!”

The following narrative, based on facts, which has been written by one who has personally drawn from reliable sources

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the events that are portrayed therein, may serve the young as a reminder of the time when the Union was convulsed in her death-struggle; of the truth that history will repeat itself, and of the principle that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty!

THE AUTHOR.

August 10, 1911.

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CHAPTER I

THE PARTING

IN the fall of 1860, at a street corner in Buffalo, New York, a young man of about twenty years and a girl, three years his junior, were engaged in animated conversation. Below them, toward the west, stretched out Lake Erie, covered with vessels of many kinds, that, with their white sails flopping in the wind, resembled huge vultures of the sea. Suddenly the shrill whistle of a steamboat was heard; whereupon the young man embraced and kissed his companion and tearfully hastened away in the direction from which the disturbing messenger had come.

A person's action is but the indication of his mind. To understand this action

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we must penetrate the marvellous folds of that mind, and there detect the source from which issue the mysterious messages that kindle the eye in the joy of meeting and crush the heart in the anguish of parting. Applying this method of discovery to the incident which has been related in the foregoing lines, necessitates the giving of a brief history of the young persons who have been introduced.

Albert and Ruth Burdett were brother and sister; they were born and brought up in the city in which we met them. Their father, who died about five years previous, had been a successful merchant, possessed of genial nature, fond of social gatherings and fond of the treacherous beverage, whiskey, which was then retailed at twenty cents a gallon, and which, by its worshippers, was lauded as a medicine. The result was inevitable. Slowly, but with an unfailing

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accuracy, this medicine did its work. The steady use for years made the formerly vigorous man a palsied wreck. The prayers and tears of his wife could not arrest the tragical end, the premature death and the drunkard's grave. Upon Albert, then but fourteen years old, fell the main burden of providing for the destitute family. A life-insurance policy was found among the deceased's private papers; the policy, however, had been long since forfeited for the non-payment of dues.

The mother, once the enthusiastic and able teacher in the public schools of Buffalo, had accepted her lover's offer of marriage without the precaution of investigating his former habits. She was entirely ignorant, at the time of her marriage, of his fondness for liquor.

Before the birth of her oldest child, however, she had noticed, with deadly fear, her husband's growing passion for

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strong drink. Dreading the results that might ensue to her posterity, the chief task of her life was henceforth to counteract the hereditary tendencies of nature by teaching her children that self-control and those high ideals of virtue which, like a talisman, guard their possessor against the vices of this life and insure for him a happy old age.

Although the payment of the expenses of her husband's last sickness and death had necessitated the sale of every available means of future support, the mother was determined to keep her family together. Albert's scanty earnings proved insufficient to provide for the necessities of life, therefore the frail mother was compelled to take in sewing and other light work in order to make a living. Thus unremitting work, depressing care and tantalizing fear of the future were slowly draining her life. Five years after her husband's death, the

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mother was also summoned. She died in her son's arms, with an indescribable expression of love and tenderness in her eyes, after her darling boy had pledged to remain ever true to her teachings.

The memory of that moment overcame Albert when, in the painful hurry of another parting, he saw, or seemed to see, in his sister's eyes the reflection of his angel-mother's last look.

With a small sum of money that was left from the proceeds of a public sale, Albert purchased a steamboat ticket for Milwaukee, and a valise for his clothes. These, together with a few school books that he had refused to sell, constituted his entire wealth, all of which he had left on board the steamer on the evening before he was to leave Buffalo. His sister had found a home with a friend of the family, by whom she was welcomed as a daughter. Thus freed from present care, brother and sister had, on the

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morning of Albert's departure for the West, once more visited their mother's grave and those other places to which the heart-strings will cling most firmly when leaving the old home.

Westward! What a word then and now! Like magic arose before Albert's view endless prairies, gigantic streams, sparkling lakes, primeval forests, towering mountains, eternal snow, eternal spring, wealth, power, and freedom from social rank and social vice! Whose pulse would not beat quicker, and whose eyes would not shine brighter, at the thought of the glorious West?

CHAPTER II

FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST

IN those gloomy days of political unrest and grim signs of an approaching storm, that was steadily fanned by the friends of free trade and slavery, business was almost at a standstill; public and private improvements were not even considered; consequently, the demand for labor was stagnant in the East as well as in the West. Money was scarce; interest thereon and the prices of all commodities were high; whereas the prices of labor and produce were low.

Albert's ambition, from early boyhood, had been to go West; now that his mother had died and his sister had been provided with a pleasant home, there was nothing to keep him from carrying out his wish.

The whistle, which caused the young

persons' abrupt parting, had been the last signal prior to the departure of the steam-boat on which Albert had secured passage. Although running as fast as he could, he was too late; the boat had just started. Through the captain's kindness, however, who had noticed the boy's frantic efforts to be taken along, the steamer was stopped and a rope was thrown to the belated boy, with the help of which he got on board.

This incident taught Albert, in the most practical manner, the importance of punctuality. He, then, for the first time, comprehended fully the wisdom and magnitude of his mother's gentle rebukes, which had been caused by his occasional acts of carelessness in that direction.

The boat was a large one, with side wheels that were driven by two gigantic steam engines. The steam was generated by wood, since wood was then a far

cheaper fuel and was more easily obtained than coal. A large majority of the passengers were emigrants from Europe who had landed at New York, thence they had been taken by rail to Buffalo and from that city they were sent by steamers to the various states adjoining the lakes.

As soon as Albert was on board, he thanked the captain for his kindness and asked whether in return he could do anything for him. The captain, with an approving smile, said, "All right, my boy!" and then turned to a uniformed officer and whispered a few words which Albert failed to understand. Commingling with the passengers, Albert was surprised at the various languages spoken and the different costumes worn. He marvelled why Europe did not simplify intercourse among her nations by adopting one language, instead of clinging to a score or more, which he heard spoken

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among the passengers, and which only the few chosen ones were able to understand. His first acquaintance was a young Dane, whom he aided in removing a heavy trunk from the passage-way. The Dane, desirous of thanking Albert, addressed him in Danish, which language Albert could understand no more than he could understand the language of the birds.

Upon inquiry Albert ascertained that Denmark with her two million inhabitants, Norway with about the same number and Sweden with a few millions more, had each a separate language, although the entire population of those three countries was but a trifle more than that of the State of New York. Young as our friend was, he comprehended keenly what obstacles to a universal education these different languages must offer in those three countries, which by nature and ancestry should be but one. This

young reasoner, in whom was instilled the love of meditation, which had hitherto been encouraged and guided by his mother, had very little time to ponder over the languages and nations of Europe, since the officer to whom the captain had spoken, requested him to sweep the deck and thereafter to report to him. Albert at once went to work with an enthusiasm which could not fail of recognition by his superiors.

From that time to the landing at Milwaukee, Albert was steadily employed under the direction of this officer, who was the ship's steward, and who proved to be a kind friend and master. During the few days of the journey Albert assisted the cook and the machinists; helped at the different stations to take in the cord wood that was used as fuel under those large boilers; polished the windows of the different cabins, and in fact made himself so useful that he became the favorite of

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all. He was also one of nature's favorites; slender and a trifle taller than the average man, with deep-set gray eyes and broad forehead, and with features that expressed the honesty of his actions and his desire to please, he appeared like a sunbeam among the anxious and careworn faces of the strangers on board.

At the end of the journey the steward handed him a five-dollar bill and invited him to remain in service on board the ship at a corresponding rate of wages. Albert was amazed to receive pay for services that by agreement he had rendered free of charge, and to receive an offer of employment when he had feared that his work had been so insignificant and poorly done as not to meet approval, nor had he ever thought of a permanent occupation on board of any ship. He reluctantly took the money, but excused himself for not accepting the offer of further employment. Albert was unable

to express his longing for the West and for the realization of his dreams of independence, which had chiefly prevented him from accepting the steward's kind offer; or else he would have added an explanation to his excuse, thus lessening, if not entirely disarming, the chagrin that the steward felt upon Albert's flat refusal.

Albert left the ship's crew with a heavy heart, fully appreciating the value of such an offer when labor everywhere went begging and enterprise seemed to be extinct. The steward's chilly goodbye and his refusal to shake hands with Albert upon parting, tormented the boy with the kind heart; and if he had not accidentally heard that the captain's interest in him had been chiefly caused by the fact that Albert's mother, whose history the captain well knew, had been for years the teacher of his children, and that her unwise marriage and its fatal

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results had been known and freely commented upon, especially by the parents of her scholars, Albert would have immediately returned and would have accepted the offer of employment with thanks. While Albert appreciated the captain's kindness, he instinctively shrank from being pitied, preferring to choose the path carved out by himself, no matter how difficult of ascent, to the easy, well trodden path prepared by others.

Who is going to blame the boy? Is not the man's ideal likewise his heaven, no matter whether it leads him to fame or to death?

Milwaukee was then, as it is now, one of the prettiest cities in the West. Upon Albert's arrival the rays of the setting sun were reflected by the scrupulously clean windows of its buildings. Delighted with the sombre beauty of the city and landscape, he searched for a modest, but clean, hotel, in which the charges would be in

accordance with the condition of his purse. He made these arrangements in anticipation of finding something to do in order to enjoy the beauties of the city and its surroundings before going further west.

For five days he searched for employment, being ready and willing to do any honest work for any reasonable compensation. A farmer, living about five miles from the city, offered him work on his farm for the entire fall and winter, agreeing to pay him five dollars a month with board and lodging until December first of that year and thereafter board and lodging only. Albert was very reluctant to accept that offer and asked the friendly farmer for three days' time in order to find a better job, if possible, to which request the farmer cheerfully assented.

Albert had never worked on a farm; he understood nothing about that work; the wages were so low as scarcely to

enable him to purchase the necessary clothing during the approaching winter. With such thoughts, he walked anxiously through the streets of Milwaukee on the last day before he would be bound. He had striven hard to obtain some better paying and more congenial employment, but all in vain; every employer whom he had asked for work had promised somebody else the place if a vacancy should occur. His courage was tested sorely; his glowing picture of the West was rapidly displaced by scenes of ghastly poverty; he even censured himself for having rejected the ship steward's generous offer, and as a partial consolation he resolved to act more wisely in the future.

While wrapped up in such gloomy thoughts, and in the very act of returning to his hotel, resolved to accept the farmer's offer, he observed a man posting on a billboard a placard containing the following announcement:

FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST

MEN WANTED! Wages 85 Cents a day! Free Transportation! Enquire at the office of
..... Railroad Company.
..... Agent.

This timely information kindled a ray of hope and confidence in Albert's downcast mood. He thought of his mother's steadfast belief, often expressed by her, that the darker the night the nearer and brighter would be the morning. No brighter morning had ever dawned for her; disappointment and anguish had ever been her lot; or was her last look, so full of love and confidence, despite the death struggle, the dawning of that brighter morning?

With clenched teeth he fought down the tears and went to work. He searched for the railroad company's agent; ascertained the condition and the kind of the future employment; stipulated with the agent about the time of leaving for his new field of labor; sent notice to his

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farmer friend; settled with his landlord, whose bill balanced Albert's cash, and on the next morning he entered the cars for the unknown West.

CHAPTER III

THE FLIGHT

THE journey by rail proved very interesting to Albert. The railroad was but recently built; the roadbed was still rough; the speed of the train was rapid and the motion of the cars was correspondingly jolting. The varying panorama of the landscape was, on the other hand, so beautifully strange and pleasing that Albert's attention was continually riveted upon those scenes of passing forests that had never been disturbed by man; of endless prairies that were covered with strange flowers; of glittering lakes that resembled sparkling diadems in Queen Nature's crown, and of rivulets that seemed to be the silvery paths of nymphs. These pictures were now and then interrupted only by a lonely building or some little hamlet or

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town. Albert's imagination was aroused to the utmost, notwithstanding the occasional bumps that he received from the refractory car nor the pangs of hunger caused by an empty stomach and an empty purse.

About an hour before sunset Albert noticed every now and then, far in the west between a chain of hills, what appeared to be a white cloud, upon which the rays of the sun were reflected with an unusual brilliancy. While his whole attention was directed to that phenomenon, the train was rounding a curve; what had hitherto appeared like a cloud to Albert's searching eyes, revealed itself now to be in fact the Mississippi, the "Father of Waters," stretching his gigantic arms toward both poles, encircling large islands, carrying majestic ships and silently, but irresistibly, gliding onward to his destination. Albert gazed, with folded hands, upon that stupendous sight,

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of which no description had ever given him even a faint idea, and of which no picture had ever been a remote resemblance of its grandeur.

Upon arrival at the terminus of that branch of the railroad, an official directed the passengers who desired to continue their journey on that evening, to a landing on the bank of the river. A small ferry boat, driven by steam, awaited the travelers, among whom was Albert, who, wearied from the day's exciting scenes, penniless and hungry, wondered what the next developments would bring.

A twenty minutes' ride among some islands landed them at dusk on the desired shore. The outlook was discouraging; no buildings of any kind were visible; the boat was tied to a rude platform that was fastened on logs; while as far as the eye could reach nothing but willows could be seen. A farmer with his ox-team and wagon, a few boys and a tall man with

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a lantern, received the newcomers; no other being was in sight and Albert felt as if he were entering a new and unexplored world.

The man with the lantern turned out to be the postmaster of the next village, Albert's destination, and its sole hotel-keeper. However pleasant the meeting of Uncle Sam's protecting arm in the shape of a postmaster and a dispenser of the daily bread in one and the same person might have been to the other travelers, the dualistic nature of the officer indicated to Albert the size of the settlement which was to be his next home, and reduced his expectations in proportion which his picture of the great West bore to the picture of the supposed village beyond the willows.

The captain of the little craft handed a mail-bag to the postmaster and also introduced him to Albert and the other two passengers as Mr. Henry who would

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thereafter take care of them. Mr. Henry's invitation to follow him was gladly accepted. A mile's tramp on a poorly kept road brought them to a small village where they halted before a dimly lighted frame house. The landlord entered with his three followers and invited them to sit down and make themselves at home, while he would be distributing the mail in the next room. Albert smiled at the suggestion of making himself at home in the dingy room that was filled with rough pine tables and benches, interspersed with a few indifferent looking chairs. One wall was decorated with some plain pine shelving upon which stood a large assortment of half-filled bottles containing a variety of whiskies and brandies. The air was still dense with tobacco smoke instead with the fragrance of a tasty supper, and Albert was penniless, tired and hungry!

His traveling companions were an

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Irishman and a German; both middle aged, and neither showed any signs of discomfort; on the contrary, they searched for their tobacco, filled and lighted their pipes, leaned back in their chairs and smoked, filling the room denser and denser with smoke and compelling Albert, who had never used tobacco, to go outdoors in order to keep from choking.

In the meantime the landlord was busy with sorting and handing out the mail to several callers, some of whom entered the so-called barroom and from there reached the small room in which the mail was distributed and which was called the post office. This latter room was also accessible from the street.

As soon as the postmaster was alone, Albert entered and asked him whether there would be any show of obtaining supper and a night's lodging without present payment; explaining further that

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he had been sent by the railroad company to work in the neighborhood, and that he would soon be able to pay his debt; yet, in order to secure the payment, he would pledge his valise and its contents with the landlord. The latter looked amused and kindly answered the conscientious boy that a supper for the three guests was ready to be served in the dining-room; that Albert could stay over night without pledging his property; that the railroad company had sent him notice of the arrival of the three new men and that the company would be holden to him for the payment of their first night's lodging and one day's board.

How little is sufficient to throw the human mind from gloom into exultation! The prospect of supper and the riddance of his immediate financial troubles, cast a ray of light over Albert's features that caused the landlord to lay his hand en Albert's shoulder and direct him into the

dining-room, where, behind a large table, which was covered with a neat cloth, stood the landlord's pretty daughter who pleasantly invited him to sit down and help himself. She then called the other two men, who were still smoking, to get ready and come to supper. They reluctantly put up their pipes and obeyed the order. During the meal Albert heard the daughter whisper to her mother in the adjoining kitchen: "See, mamma, what a contrast there is between the clean face of that boy and the smoked, grimy faces of the two men!"

Early the next morning the guests were called to breakfast and told that the "boss" had sent for them, and for that purpose had entrusted his own light wagon and spirited horse to the messenger who was waiting for them outside. The news was gladly received by the three guests who, immediately after breakfast, mounted the boss's two-seated light

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wagon. Albert seated himself beside the driver, a boy of his own age, after the two smokers had instinctively chosen one and the same seat, much to Albert's relief, who inwardly repeated the old saying, "Birds of a feather flock together."

It was a beautiful morning as they drove through the little village; the sun had dispersed a light fog and was rapidly warming the chill morning air; the few stores were slowly opened and the smoke issuing from the chimneys, went straight up to heaven.

The two boys were visibly touched by the majestic splendor around them, whereas the two men were lighting their pipes and bemoaning that their supply of tobacco would not last them until evening. A two-mile drive landed them in front of a large cabin, before which a group of laboring men was apparently waiting for the arrival of the re-enforce-

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ment from the village. The newcomers were subjected to a close inspection by these men who were destined to become their co-workers. Albert was the first to dismount. With his valise in hand he bade a cheerful "good-morning" to the bystanders, who, without responding to his salute in any way, stared at him as if his appearance among them was a mistake, whereas the two men were welcomed with such ease and cordiality that invariably create in the stranger a home-like feeling and take from him, in the very beginning, the peculiar unpleasant sensation of being among strangers.

The boss, a man of middle age, tall, broad-shouldered, red-faced, with a light moustache and sharp gray eyes, welcomed the newcomers with a hearty shaking of hands and directed them to put their bundles in certain parts of the cabin and then, if they were ready, to commence

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the work with the others. His directions were readily obeyed, especially by Albert, who had been longing for a kind word from any one with whom he had to associate thereafter.

The laborers formed two gangs; the two men were detailed to the one and Albert became a member of the other that was under the direct supervision of the boss himself. The cabin was built on the side of a high hill and was protected from the north and west winds by a thicket of jack oaks and underbrush. In a few minutes' walk toward the river the men reached their field of labor, namely, a roadbed at the foot of the hill, which was to be raised by the removal of earth from the adjoining hill, until the required grade was reached. The wheelbarrows used for that purpose were run on planks that were supported by devices made of scantlings. These devices were of different heights in order to conform to

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the varying elevations between the hill and the grade. Each gang was subdivided into diggers and wheelers; Albert, who had the choice of the two occupations, chose the wheeling.

At noon, the two gangs met at the cabin; the practice of washing hands and face at noon seemed not to exist among them, consequently Albert had to shift as well as he could in order to yield to that lifelong habit of washing himself at noon, without letting his violation of the prevailing fashion be noticed by the company. Upon entering the cabin, Albert observed at a glance the frowzy red hair of the woman and the streaky hands of her spouse, with which he gave the finishing touches to the knives, forks and spoons that were scattered upon the two tables.

Stationary wooden benches served as chairs. A baby, apparently six months old, was lying upon a couch near the

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cooking stove, kicking and yelling lustily. The whole scene had a depressing influence upon Albert, which was considerably enhanced after he had fished from the soup one of those red hairs; and after the husband, with his streaky hands, had cut a special large piece of bread that he handed to Albert, and after the baby kept on yelling notwithstanding its mother's boisterous scolding. Albert's appetite and hunger, although keen at first, fled, and after excusing himself, he, too, fled from the untouched dinner into the clean atmosphere outside where, throwing himself down among the trees, he wondered why man himself should be his greatest foe.

Still faint from hunger, the disenchanted boy stood his ground with heroic courage during the afternoon's work. His Irish friends, who loved to joke with the greenhorn, as they called Albert, took special pains to load his wheelbarrow the

heaviest in order to test his strength and make him ask for a change. Toward evening Albert's hands were blistered, his back was almost broken and his limbs trembled from the unusual work; he was in the act of demanding a rest when luckily a loud whistle gave the sign that the day's labor was ended.

The shovels were then cleaned, as they had been at noon, with such unusual care that Albert wished that the same care would thereafter be applied to the victuals and dishes of the culinary department. All hands then gathered in front of the cabin around two barrels of water and a few benches on which were scattered several wash-basins and pieces of soap. Each gang used one barrel, one bench and one towel. When Albert's turn came to use the towel, which in the beginning had been of questionable cleanliness, but which now had the color of the soil they had handled all day, he, whose

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mother had taught him to observe the utmost cleanliness, shrank from touching it, but preferred to let the wind do the drying part.

The unpleasant features at the dinner table were more or less applicable to the supper. Albert managed, only with the utmost self-control, to eat sufficiently to lessen in part the pain of the gnawing hunger, which, after the short rest from work, had attacked him fiercely.

For the better understanding of the events that took place after supper, which will be hereafter related, a brief reference to the educational standing of the acting persons is necessary.

A large majority of the laborers who were employed in the two gangs, were of foreign birth. They were jovial and witty, but, as a rule, lamentably deficient in general knowledge and in the culture which a general knowledge necessarily creates. Albert, however,

had received from early infancy special training from his mother, who had carefully nourished and guided the boy's inquisitiveness; his teachers had followed his mother's methods and principles. They had a special liking for the boy with the open face, whose eyes seemed to implore them incessantly for a revelation of the wonders which he met daily. Nor did this educating process end when his father died and he was compelled to leave school in order to aid his mother in keeping the family together; although steadily employed, he still, with his mother's help, found and forced opportunities to enlarge his knowledge.

Albert's appearance among his collaborators became at once one of the topics of conversation. His acts and language, his reserve at the table and elsewhere were criticized by some and praised by others. He had been, during the working hours, considerably annoyed by some

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attempted ridicule of his actions uttered by several of his co-laborers while conversing in a tone just loud enough to be heard and understood by him. It was plainly observable that his better language, more refined conduct and his abstaining from the use of tobacco, made him odious to the envious and evil disposed members of both gangs.

After supper Albert selected a quiet spot in the grove and read the newspaper which his kind landlord had given him on the evening before. Exhausted as he was, he soon fell asleep and did not awaken until he heard a loud voice calling him. Entering the cabin, a strange sight met him; the large space along the walls, between them and the benches, was filled with straw upon which had been placed blankets and pillows; two blankets and one pillow were apportioned to each person; several of the men were sleeping, while about ten of them were seated

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around one of the tables, smoking and frequently passing to each other a gallon jug filled with whiskey, of which the company drank freely.

A loud, coarse laugh greeted Albert as he entered; one of the drinkers, who had just finished a considerable swig, handed the jug to Albert with the remark that a good drink would stiffen him for the next day's labor. Albert politely refused. His would-be benefactor thereupon angrily demanded the reason why he refused, to which Albert made no answer, but asked the cook's husband, who had just entered, what sleeping arrangements had been made for the newcomers. Before the latter could answer several of the drinkers had arisen, among them the first questioner, who, once more handing the jug to Albert, sternly demanded him to drink or be damned.

By this time every person in the cabin

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was awake and looked at the contestants with eager interest, mentally choosing sides between them in anticipation of the approaching fight, which, as experience had taught them, was sure to follow. Albert's antagonist was by far the taller and heavier of the two, and, fired with whiskey, he became a dangerous man; all of which was known to the older hands, but not to Albert. Angered by the rough and commanding tone of his tormentor, he shoved the jug to one side and was about to select that part of the straw and blankets as his bed where his valise had been placed, when he was savagely interrupted. Provoked at Albert's silence and refusal to drink, the infuriated Irishman, with an oath, seized the jug and struck at his head; Albert, however, with almost lightning speed, dodged the blow, snatched his valise and fled.

CHAPTER IV

CONGENIAL FRIENDS

“**W**HAT next?” These words were involuntarily uttered by Albert as he hastened from the scene in which his cup of misery had been filled to the brim. He penetrated the dark night toward the village that contained the only place for which he longed, namely, the little room in which the landlord’s outstretched hand and sympathetic words had brought to the wandering orphan a touch of home. What a magnet is a kind word! How rapid were the strides with which Albert hurried to the only kind face that he had met in the great West. He soon lost the faint wagon track that led to the village, yet he tramped swiftly onward, being directed by the great river only, his earthly friend, since all the celestial

guides, sun, moon and stars, had failed to give him light. Although nearly a mile distant from the river he heard the splashing of its waters and saw occasionally the glimmering of its bright face.

In this connection his mind recalled the beauty of yesterday's picture as he unexpectedly beheld the river and its majestic valley. He pondered over the present gloomy situation, which, as he reasoned, had been brought about by man's depravity only. Suddenly, like the recollection of a long forgotten melody, came to his agitated heart that belief in the final triumph of justice; that peace of mind which man has vainly sought in the grave-like stillness of the cloister and in the bloody tumult of battle; that peace which descends only to him who, like his friend the river, quietly and steadily performs his duties and rids himself from the slush of the world without soiling his conscience.

"But did he do his duty when he refused to give his reason for not touching the liquor?" severely asked his well-trained conscience, its severity being somewhat increased by the recollection of his departed mother's patience with him when he had failed in that respect; yet this very recollection consoled and tormented him at the same time. Was not the use of liquor sanctioned by high and low, and did not his refusal to drink appear as obstinacy intended to provoke a quarrel with a drunken man? Why did he not tell his assailant that he had pledged to his dying mother never knowingly to drink a drop of liquor? Would not that answer have prevented the ugly scene? Perhaps! Should he, however, in such company have mentioned his mother's name, spoken of her last moments which he had ever regarded as the most sacred recollection of his life? No! Rather than to commit such a sacrilege

he would suffer the odium of being called a coward.

Albert's heart grew lighter at the thought that he, on the spur of the moment, had acted wisely and justly. Serenely, like his friend the river, he pursued his way, entering the hotel with beaming face just as the landlord shook hands with a tall, bearded man of middle age and bade him a good night.

Albert's entrance at that late hour—the clock was striking eleven—had a remarkable effect upon the landlord, who, with a queer expression of wonder, turned to his tall visitor and said: "That is the very boy I told you about." Both men thereupon shook hands with Albert and pointing to his valise asked him: "Now, tell us!"

They seated themselves around a table on which the landlord placed crackers and cheese; having been informed of Albert's peculiar aversion to whiskey

and tobacco he added a glass of soda water for the boy, while he and his friend took brandy and munched crackers between drinks; whereas, Albert, with an appetite becoming a twenty-year-old boy and with a corresponding hunger after the day's fasting, made the crackers disappear as quickly as he had made the clouds of misery disappear, that but a short time since had almost driven him to distraction.

After Albert had faithfully related the events that had caused his flight, both men shook hands with their young friend, fully approving his conduct. The landlord added that rows among those two gangs had been frequent, and that they must have had a severe fight among themselves after Albert had left, since the village doctor had been sent for and had not yet returned.

The landlord then explained to Albert that his friend, John Gibson, was engaged

with a company of young men in grading a part of the railroad-bed near the village, and that the company desired to engage a few more young and decent men to help, and for that purpose had authorized Mr. Gibson to call at the hotel on that evening to inquire after any new and suitable arrivals and at his discretion engage one or more. Mr. Gibson, who in that vicinity was known by the name of John, by which name we shall also know him hereafter, replied that the landlord, just before Albert's entrance, had spoken of a young man who had come to the village on the evening before and who would have been the desired man if the railroad company had not sent him to the Irish division; that therefore Albert's entrance (who was the young man referred to) at that time, with valise in hand, seemed to them miraculous; but that the miracle, now fully explained, had nothing more wonder-

ful in it than there had been in miracles that occurred many years ago.

John further stated that his company was composed of nine members; each one having received a fair common school education, and some of them had even attended colleges and universities; that the company was a peculiar mixture of nationalities, but since they were all sensible and temperate no serious quarrels had as yet arisen. At this juncture Albert glanced involuntarily at the empty glass before the speaker; John, noticing the movement, repeated smilingly: "Yes, all are temperate, even I, who use liquor strictly medicinally."

John further explained that his company had contracted with the railroad company for the building of a large stretch of roadbed at a certain price per cubic yard; that they were paid semi-monthly, but that ten per cent. of the amount earned was withheld until the final com-

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pletion and acceptance of the roadbed as provided for in a written contract; that they had leased a two-story log house, adjoining the village, from the railroad company and had engaged a family to keep house for them; that after the payment of all the running expenses, the net earnings, during each fortnight, were divided among them in equal shares, and that hitherto the ninety per cent. of these earnings had exceeded the amount which they could have earned at the usual rate of eight-five cents a day. He continued that there was a serious danger of losing the ten per cent. by winter setting in early and preventing them from completing the job as agreed upon; that therefore the company was desirous of engaging one or more intelligent, sober and industrious young men who would accept these conditions and were willing to run the same risk of payment as the members of the company had done

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hitherto. He then asked Albert whether he would accept a partnership on those terms.

Instead of answering, Albert pressed his friend's hand. The unexpected offer, the sudden change from the prospect of humiliating poverty before him to an offer of a paying position among men of culture, acted upon his vocal organs as the sudden transition from utter darkness to brilliant light would have acted upon his organs of sight. At the parting on that evening it was agreed that Albert should stay at the hotel over night, and on the following day, after breakfast, join his new comrades at their work.

Next morning Albert appeared at the appointed place. He was cordially greeted by John and the other members of the company who were in the act of commencing the day's work and who, like the members of the Irish gang, gave

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him the choice between digging and wheeling. He chose, as before, the wheeling.

Albert worked with a will. The intelligent faces about him served as an inspiration to his mind and as a strengthener to his muscles. He soon noticed that his wheelbarrow was less heavily loaded than those of the others, which caused him to beg the diggers, quaintly and sincerely, not to stint him but to give him his full share and more, if possible. As soon as his demand had been communicated to those that had failed to hear, a rippling laughter broke out, and a young man, dressed in blue overalls, turned his wheelbarrow upside down, mounted it, and with a loud voice, but with an accent that clearly marked him to be a foreigner, proposed to give the new recruit three cheers in recognition of his courage, sense of justice, and of having successfully passed the ordeal of

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initiation as the new member of the Log House Company. The three cheers were given amidst the banging of shovels and the rattling of wheelbarrows; then every member shook hands with Albert, after which the work was resumed with increased energy and with increased results.

At precisely twelve o'clock at noon John, who was evidently the manager, called "Dinner," whereupon every wheelbarrow stopped and every shovel was dropped. Albert expected that according to the practice in vogue with the Irish gang, the shovels would be carefully cleaned before going to dinner; therein, however, he was strangely disappointed. He failed to recognize that the skilled builders of railroads, for which the Irish were noted, although lacking in the so-called culture otherwise, will do their utmost to reach their ideal of building railroads, whereas the college-bred youth,

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whose ideal is yet the building of air-castles, is very apt to overlook some essential point in building railroads.

The men started toward the house which was located in a grove, about two hundred rods distant from where the grading was carried on. Upon the way John briefly informed Albert of the name, nationality and, as far as he knew, of the history of each member of the company and that their ages varied between twenty and twenty-five years. Commencing with Fred Lambert, the speaker of the morning, John gave the following sketches:

“Fred Lambert is a native of Germany and a graduate of one of its universities. He left Germany in order to escape a military career that had been mapped out for him by his parents and relatives. He drifted West for want of congenial employment in the East; from a boot-blacker in a hotel he rose to a wielder of

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the shovel, and he is now a valuable member of this organization.

"Ralph Bowdoin and Paul Gerard are two New England boys. They were friends in the East and remained friends in the West. Both were graduated at the same time from an eastern high school, began teaching school, and during vacations read law with some practicing attorneys. Becoming short of money, they tried the great West and her enticing fortunes by commencing to help build a railroad.

"Byron Burns is an Englishman; he ran away from his studies in Oxford University and from a guardian's tyranny, as he expressed it, in order to breathe the air of freedom in America, of which our prairies gave him more than he expected or desired. He is a close reasoner, an indefatigable student, and an excellent worker with the shovel; each evening he copies a list of German

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words and commits them to memory on the next day during working hours.

“Hugo Brenner, a native of Prussia, had been drafted to serve his king for three years as a soldier; after serving three months he left his country in full uniform, armed with sword and musket and crossed the Prussian frontier, at midnight, into Belgium; there he changed his attire, packed his uniform, sword and musket securely in a large trunk, dressed himself as a Belgian student, took the train to Havre and then went by ship to New York and finally to the West.

“Carl Kron is a native of Denmark; his parents died while he was still in his teens. He had by hard work earned sufficient money to attend two terms of an eastern college, but was then compelled to go back to work for the want of funds. He, too, followed the emigration to the West and is now a good worker and a close student.

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“Lou Johnson is a Norwegian. He left his native land when he was sixteen in order to join his uncle, who was a resident of Michigan. On the day he arrived, the uncle was buried, leaving a widow and three small children with scarcely sufficient means to sustain them. He stayed a few days with his relatives, did what he could for them and then hired out to a farmer with the privilege of attending school whenever it was in session. He became a passable good English scholar. When he was twenty years of age he quit farming and came West.

“Peter Ivan is a native of Hungary; while attending a university in Austria he fought a duel with an Austrian nobleman’s son, whom he crippled for life, and for which he was condemned to a long term of imprisonment. He escaped to the United States by a daring flight which, at the time, created a great deal of

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interest among all classes of people in Europe.

"About you and me, we shall talk at some other time," laughingly remarked John as they arrived at the log house before which their comrades, who had been less deeply engaged in conversation, stood ready to enter for dinner.

CHAPTER V

THE SOUL OF THE LOG HOUSE

WHEN they entered the dining-room a well-cooked dinner, tastefully arranged and ready to be served, stood upon a long table which was covered with a spotless cloth. The whole scene forcibly impressed Albert by its simple elegance and scrupulous cleanliness. His mind wandered back to another room and table, equally elegant in its cleanliness and tasty arrangement, and created in him a homelike feeling that he had missed since his mother's death. While he was still comparing the old home with the new, a middle-aged lady entered the dining-room and invited the men to be seated, since dinner had been ready for some time. Her voice sounded to Albert as a greeting from a better world; it was so clear and precise

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and yet full of sympathy, and caused his dream of home to continue. Albert's dream was realized when John introduced the lady, whom he called Mrs. Graham, to his young friend, and she, with unmistakable kindness in her voice, welcomed him as "the hero of the cabin" and as the new member of her household.

John was seated at the head of the table; the lady assigned Albert to the opposite side, remarking that the placing of the oldest and youngest at the outposts of the company would insure success, at least, at the table. The lady's humor was contagious; Albert was astonished at the many witty, good-natured hits that were exchanged among his friends during the meal. He was furthermore exceedingly pleased at the absence of any and all coarse language among them.

At the rapping on the table by the lady of the house two girls, evidently her daughters, brought in several dishes and

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placed them on the table; this gave Fred Lambert, the late toastmaster at the roadbed grading, an opportunity to introduce Albert to the two blushing girls whom he called Miss Mary with the heavenly blue eyes, and Miss Lucy with two of the night's sparkling stars, and added that the newcomer was the only young man who had ever asked that his work should be harder without adding a prayer that his pay might be larger. Was it Fred Lambert's odd way of introduction, or was it the girls' ladylike behavior, that made Albert rise and blush like a girl who listens to the first declaration of love? Or was it the young man's inborn esteem of womanhood, irrespective of social condition, that made him bow to these two modest girls as he would have bowed had they been queens?

The entire scene was so unique and pleasing that for a few seconds the eating

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was suspended in order to give the eye and ear a chance to observe the further developments. At this awkward pause, John helped the young persons over their embarrassment by asking Albert to sit down, and telling all present that his young friend had demanded but fair play, that he had been mistreated on the first day that he worked for their Irish neighbors, by having his wheelbarrow overloaded, whereas the present company had gone to the other extreme. This humorous explanation set everybody at ease. Albert sat down laughingly, the girls escaped to the kitchen, and the dinner was finished during a lively conversation on divers topics.

On the way to work John gave Albert a few facts relating to their housekeeper and her family, which briefly were the following: Mrs. Graham's husband was a ship-builder who had been working in a shipyard in the East from where, from

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time to time, he had sent money for the support of the family who resided in the village adjoining the log house. The amounts thus sent became less and less until they were so small that Mrs. Graham had to take her daughters out of school for the want of suitable clothing and partly for the doing of the housework while she did needlework which she had obtained from the distant city, in order to earn enough to pay the rent and other necessary expenses. Soon after a letter was received from the East that Mr. Graham had been sick and in debt and would not be able to send the next monthly allowance. The letter was signed "Whiskey" and nothing more. A subsequent letter directed to Mr. Graham was returned to Mrs. Graham marked "Not called for." Thereafter all further inquiries, written and verbal, about his residence, were unavailing. From that time both girls were obliged to help their

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mother with the needlework in order to make a scanty living.

At that period the Log House Company was formed by these young men who had stranded in a neighboring city, and to whom had been leased, during the time they were working for the railroad company, the log house in which they were then residing and after which their company was named. This log house had for several years been used as a wayside inn and had been recently sold to the railroad company with all furniture. In that condition it was taken possession of by the new company. The village landlord had called the young men's attention to the Graham family, who, after some hesitation, agreed to keep house for them. After three months' trial, the family and the new company were so well satisfied with the arrangement and so assured of the other's pure intentions, that an agreement was en-

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tered into between them extending the relations during the summer months. The railroad company had subsequently bought a section of timber adjoining the village and had engaged the young men to chop and pile five hundred cords of wood which was to be done before the opening of the next spring.

Albert thanked his friend for the valuable and interesting statements pertaining to the Graham family and their own company. He appreciated to the fullest extent, John's friendship and confidence in him by these disclosures, and resumed work even more joyfully than before.

In the afternoon Albert noticed with great interest the difference between the work that is performed by a laborer who is financially interested in the result and between the work of one who is hired and paid by the day only. The united interest of his present companions made

all work run smoothly and evenly, no trivial pretext was used for an occasional cessation of labor when the master's eye was not on them, as he had frequently observed the day before among the gang whose greatest reward for the labor of each individual was eighty-five cents a day, no matter how fast or slow they worked. He himself felt keenly the invigorating influence of being master instead of hireling; of being the architect of his own fortune instead of being the recipient of a predetermined morsel dealt out through the employer's will or necessity.

In further tracing this idea his memory wandered back to the long winter evenings at home in which his mother had pointed out to him in history the downfall of all governments that had tolerated slavery and had been sustained by the labor of slaves and hirelings. Reasoning further in that line of thought his mind naturally

and forcibly turned to his own country in which slavery was as much tolerated and protected as it had been in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. The magnitude of this thought burst, for the first time, so powerfully upon him, that, while he was wheeling a heavy load from the pit to the grade on a plank only a foot wide, he lost his balance, precipitating himself and his wheelbarrow a distance of about ten feet, and nearly spraining his ankle. The result was a broken wheelbarrow, Albert's change of employment from a wheeler to a digger and the proceedings in the evening, which will be related hereafter.

While Albert, with all his might, was loading the wheelbarrow as his predecessor had done, he could not determine which caused him the greater pain, the sore ankle or the inability to solve his country's predicament of harboring slave labor. He had as yet not heard of the

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preparations that were being made for the final battle against slavery under the direction of Abraham Lincoln, the untutored cabin boy of Kentucky. The cares of a household had hidden from Albert the beginning of that gigantic struggle which was destined to sweep over the new world and drench its virgin soil with blood and tears.

After supper on the same day, John called the members of the company together for a business meeting, especially for the purpose of acquainting the new member with the company's unwritten law. All members were present when John, the chairman, stated that the wilful or careless breaking or destroying of any property belonging to the company was punishable by the payment into the treasury of the value of the destroyed article, and that in case a dispute should arise whether the destruction had been careless or accidental only, a committee of three

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should be appointed to investigate the matter. John stated further that Albert's wheelbarrow had been almost totally destroyed and that the wishes of the company in that matter should be ascertained. Albert arose immediately and acknowledged that he had been careless and that he would pay. This statement was disputed by Lou Johnson, the Norwegian, who had loaded the fated vehicle and who claimed that the accident might have been caused by uneven loading. This version of the matter was seconded by the two Americans, Ralph Bowdoin and Paul Gerard, who insisted that a vote should decide that question and not Albert's confession of carelessness, since he was still a minor, and not competent to condemn himself.

The chairman was not of the same opinion, claiming that Albert's confession of guilt, since he was working for himself, should be respected, although he was still

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of non-age; and he should be permitted to reimburse the company for the damage suffered. The new point of law that was raised by the chairman led to a further discussion, whether, under any circumstances, a confession of guilt made by a person who was in his right mind and capable of understanding the situation, should or could be disregarded. Albert observed with pleasure that every speaker had the required sense to quit talking when he had nothing more to say, and that about one half of the members had studied the rudiments of law in the schools and colleges of their respective countries. The final result of the matter was that Albert's confession of guilt was accepted to the satisfaction of all the members.

This controversy, insignificant as the points of issue might have been, taught them in a practical way the analytical power of discussion and the importance and ease with which the blending of

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the opinions of the old world with those of the new could be accomplished, if the contesting parties were honest, able and willing to put self below the common good.

Encouraged by the recent success, the members resolved to enjoy many similar meetings and to change the name of "Log House Company" to "The Log House Club." The resolution was carried.

During the evening's discussion the ladies of the house had been busy in cleaning the table, washing dishes, preparing eatables for the next day and in similar work. Albert was very desirous to renew his acquaintance with them and, if possible, appear more like himself in their society. This opportunity was granted him on the same evening in the following manner:

After the club meeting had adjourned and Mrs. Graham and her daughters had

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completed their duties, they asked Albert's advice and help in locating and putting up a new bedstead that had been sent by the village hotel keeper for his accommodation. The lady's agreeable voice and her sensible direction won at once Albert's esteem and confidence, and he complied with her wishes with such enthusiasm and understanding that Mrs. Graham could not suppress the desire of bestowing upon him some caressing word of approval.

When all the arrangements for his present welfare had been completed, the lady asked him to get better acquainted with her daughters, since both of them felt very sorry on account of the disagreeable situation in which he had been placed at dinner by Fred Lambert's odd introduction. This time the mother, with a few complimentary words as to Albert's readiness to help, introduced him and expressed her pity for the afternoon's

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accident. Albert, noticing a well-known arithmetic lying opened on the table at which the girls had been seated when he entered the room, asked, in order to direct their attention from him to themselves, whether they were studying arithmetic. Both girls admitted that they were still endeavoring to keep up with their classes, hoping to attend school again the next year, and asked his advice as to the solving of a difficult problem that had been marked on the open page before them. When he had acquainted himself with what the author meant, he readily explained to the delighted girls the true method of solving the knotty problem, after which, with a pleasant "good-night," he took leave of his new friends.

Albert was now fully settled in his new home; his bed and a small table occupied a corner of a spacious room upstairs; his roommates were Fred Lambert, Carl Kron, Ralph Bowdoin and Paul Gerard,

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who occupied two other beds. The room was well ventilated and lighted. Although the bare logs were visible in the walls, the entire room invited Albert to make it not alone a place for sleeping but also a place for study. For that purpose he put up a shelf near the window, placed his school books upon it, and after this was done laid down to sleep and to dream of his late home in Buffalo.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOLUTION OF THE OLDEST QUESTION OF MANKIND

THERE is no action so trivial but that it may have in its wake some unexpected results; for instance, Mrs. Graham, having overheard Albert's ready way of explaining the intricate example of the evening before, called John's attention to Albert's exact knowledge of arithmetic and recommended him for the position of the company's secretary. To this position was attached a substantial salary, as the work required the utmost exactness and considerable time after working hours. John thanked her for the information, and acting upon her suggestion, consulted the other members during the day as to their choice for secretary and Albert's fitness for that position. All were in

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favor of their youngest comrade, even Byron Burns, the present secretary.

It was agreed to inform Albert that very evening of their choice, and in the event of his acceptance, to celebrate his appointment. After supper, when everybody was in the dining-room, including the ladies who shared the secret, but who had never attended a business session, John called the meeting to order. Turning to Albert he informed him that, by the unanimous choice of the club, he was herewith appointed its secretary, with a salary of ten dollars a month in addition to his share of the net profits. Before Albert had time to recover from his surprise, Byron Burns handed him the books of the company with the assurance that he would cheerfully aid the newly installed secretary at any time when called upon.

The presence of Mrs. Graham and her daughters, and their peculiar smile and

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behavior, caused Albert to guess easily the source of his appointment. Bowing to the ladies and to the chairman, with a pleasant smile, but with a look of stern determination, he thanked his friends for the honor bestowed upon him, which he would accept under one condition only, namely, that in the future deliberations at their meetings the ladies of the house should be urged to take an active part. He assigned as his reasons that their work was equally as hard as that of the other members, that they worked as many hours, if not more, as the men, and that nature in her great wisdom compels the union of the intellect of both sexes for the attainment of perfect happiness and success in life.

The impression of this speech upon his hearers was peculiar. Mrs. Graham blushed, her daughters nodded approval, the chairman leaned back in his chair and smiled, and the rest of the men got

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up and applauded their youngest member, who so ably had woven his mother's mature wisdom in his manly speech. When order was restored, John arose and favorably commented upon Albert's proposal. He invited all present, especially the ladies, to express themselves on the question before the house, claiming that a thorough discussion of the subject might lead to untold blessings.

Mrs. Graham accepted the invitation and without rising, thanked Albert for his good opinion of women, but deplored the necessity of their absence from the meetings of the club for want of time, illustrating her point by mentioning but a partial list of duties which were waiting to be performed by her and her daughters that very evening, such as washing dishes, preparing the next morning's breakfast, mending garments and many other tasks equally important. She asserted in conclusion that women, as the soul of the

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household, should not interfere with men's work and that for these reasons mentioned she and her daughters should be excused.

After this declaration a painful silence followed; at last Albert took the floor once more and thanked the lady for her frank statement, acknowledging its weight, but not its conclusiveness. He referred to the schools of his native city and to the efforts that had been made for separate schools on the basis that the girls should be taught, besides the common school branches, knitting and mending; that this controversy had led to quite a division among the population, a large portion insisting that the boys would be equally benefited by being taught housework and consequently they strenuously opposed any separation of the sexes in school work; that the matter was finally dropped and that the sexes were still vying with each other in the mastery of the rudiments of an education

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without including any branches of house-work.

Fred Lambert stated that he was brought up in Germany where the coeducation of the sexes was not tolerated but where the girls were taught some branches of housework in school. He presented himself as a true specimen of the result of that unwise separate teaching and as proof pointed to his coat, which for the want of a few stitches was rapidly returning to its original elements; to his vest, which, for the want of a few buttons, was held together by two wires, and to himself as a warning not to keep boys from learning what the girls are taught; on the other hand he referred to his sister in Germany who could converse in four languages, but who was unable to drive a nail to save her soul, and whose attempt at sawing wood or fitting a board were so dangerous to her life and limb that his parents had never permitted her to handle tools like

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hammer and saw, claiming that they should be used by men and boys only.

Lou Johnson smilingly remarked that he, too, had a sister, who had not only been taught by his parents to use hammer and saw, but who could use the oars, rudder and sails as well as he; that his parents and his teachers had insisted on giving the girls and boys the same chances to make a living, and that he was taught in school as well as at home to knit socks and darn them, to mend his clothes as well as to saw a board and to mend his boat; as proof he pointed to the right sleeve of his coat which he had mended by a patch that only a tailor's experienced eye could have detected. Lou was heartily applauded, even Mrs. Graham, to whom had been shown the patched sleeve, could not resist her approval.

Ralph Bowdoin illustrated to what absurdity the principle of excluding

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women from men's work would lead, even in the matter of worshipping the Creator, by citing Christian denominations in whose churches the male portion of the congregation are compelled to be seated on one side of the church and the women on the other, apparently for fear that the united worship of the sexes might displease the Creator.

The chairman now called attention to the fact that they had been, in their pleasant exchange of ideas, wandering far from the issue, which had been presented by Mrs. Graham's refusal to become an active member of the club chiefly for the want of time to attend their meetings, intimating that the united brains of Europe and America should easily find a remedy for this evil and secure for them the pleasure of the ladies' presence at all future meetings.

The chairman's timely point of order caused the allowance of a ten minutes'

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intermission for the purpose of formulating a resolution which would be acceptable and obviate all difficulties to a future full representation at their meetings. The girls were enthusiastic for joint meetings, while the mother refused to express her opinion. At the expiration of the ten minutes, the meeting was called to order and Paul Gerard proposed the following resolution:

“Resolved, that all members of the club, irrespective of race, color, sex or previous condition of servitude, shall have the right and it shall be their duty to attend all meetings of this club and to have a voice in its deliberations; and that all its members, under the direction of Mrs. Graham, shall be liable to perform, to the best of their ability, any household service which she might assign to any member.”

In support of his motion the young man reviewed the speeches that had been

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made upon the subject by the other members, and further claimed that it was the duty of the state, as well as of every citizen, to make every child as nearly independent as possible in order to resist the blows of fate that will come, sooner or later, alike to man and woman.

Paul's speech was listened to with the utmost attention; it had evidently made a good impression upon Mrs. Graham, as her features seemed to indicate approval.

Albert, whose conditional acceptance of the secretaryship had provoked this discussion, seconded Paul's motion and declared that the male portion of the club were united in their wish to aid the ladies in all household duties which they could possibly perform during the approaching long evenings, and for that purpose he had been authorized to ask the lady whether she would accept such a difficult task for the benefit of the club.

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As Albert withdrew, all eyes were directed on Mrs. Graham, who, with a visible effort, arose, addressed the chairman, and then turning to Albert and his expectant friends, declared that under such circumstances she would withdraw her objections and accept the position; that she had listened with great pleasure and profit to the able arguments of her associates, and that as the beginning of her duties as instructor of domestic science, she would ask that every member carefully examine the meaning of the words "constancy" and "persistency" and act in accordance therewith, she pledging a like action on her part.

The lady's unexpected conversion and her parting shot caused a pleasant jollification and shaking of hands with the brave woman, who, contrary to custom, had the courage to acknowledge her defeat.

The resolution was then adopted, the

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appointment of the two officers, Albert and Mrs. Graham, made and approved, and the way cleared for a practical demonstration of woman's rights within the narrow limits of the log house family.

True to her word, Mrs. Graham, on the same evening, appointed as her assistants for one week the following persons:

Fred Lambert and Ralph Bowdoin as potato peelers; Paul Gerard and Carl Kron as furnishers of firewood and kindling; Lou Johnson and Hugo Brenner as menders of the men's clothing; Byron Burns and Paul Ivan as assistants on washday and carpet cleaning; John as the general provider and all-around assistant, and Albert as her private secretary, whose duty it was to keep a record of the different appointments and their successors in office. Every appointee was further subject to any extra labor that could not be classified in advance.

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The lady appeared like a queen among her subjects; her cheeks were flushed with the excitement of the strange proceedings; her eyes glowed with a fire that an intellectual victory only can kindle, and, as she bowed and took leave of her friends, her girls rushed to her, and embracing her, kissed her cheeks.

When the door had closed upon the mother and daughters, John arose and with his voice trembling somewhat, said: "My young friends, may this scene never be blotted from your memory, may that mother's brave action be ever before you and compel you to worship and protect woman's virtue as you would protect the virtue of your own mother and sister!"

The chairman's words sank deep into the hearts of these boys, whose own mothers were far away or who slept the last sleep. Even in the dense smoke of battle, in the hour when the death-angel

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hovered over them, the deserted mother and her daughters clinging to her, were not forgotten by any one of them.

Before closing the meeting each member, upon the president's suggestion, gave a brief description of the method which had been pursued by his mother in conducting the household. Thus were all made acquainted with the simplest form of keeping a house as practiced by the peasants of Europe to the most refined in vogue among the aristocracy of England, Germany and Hungary.

CHAPTER VII

THE DANGER OF SYSTEM APPLIED TO LOVE

THE new arrangement commenced with the next day; after less than a week all members were astonished how much quicker the household work was accomplished, and how much more enjoyable each evening was spent, than before. All recognized that Mrs. Graham, by virtue of her systematic and kind government, was the mainspring of the new life that benefited all members and hurt no one, except the venders of whiskey and tobacco in the village.

Byron Burns was an expert in algebra, which science the girls were obliged to study in order to keep up with their classes in the village school. Albert knew nothing of that science, but being desirous of aiding the girls, whom he taught the advanced arithmetic, he acci-

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dently ascertained Byron's proficiency in algebra, and drafted him into service for the benefit of his pupils.

At a special meeting of the club, which was called upon Mrs. Graham's request, she spoke of the necessity of a time-table by which the different duties of the household should be governed; for instance, such as the rising in the morning, the time to eat, the time to go to bed, the hours of study, recreations and of similar duties. She requested the chairman to appoint a committee of three to draft such a time-table and to present it at the next meeting. Her request was accepted as a motion and seconded by every member. The chairman appointed Mrs. Graham, Paul Gerard and Carl Kron and requested them to report the next evening.

A reform in punctuality was needed. Each had a different time to rise, and only a few obeyed immediately the call for

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breakfast. Even the calls for dinner and supper were not strictly obeyed, all of which caused a great deal of trouble and vexation to the women.

The time-table and the provisions for its enforcement were duly presented at the next meeting. The necessity of its adoption was clearly and forcibly proved by Mrs. Graham, who compared the workings of a household to that of the planetary system; demonstrating that the rising of the sun an hour later now and then, the occasional straying from its path by Jupiter or by any other planet, and the frequent sky-larking of the moon, would lead to similar disastrous results in the management of the planetary system as the irregularities of commencing the day's work and the uncertain hours of eating meals invariably cause in the management of a household.'

After the explosion of this bombshell the few late risers and the indifferent

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attendants at meals were discouraged to move for any changes of time and reduction of fines which were attached to each violation. The law did pass and was afterwards sensibly enforced by the committee who had drafted it, and who had been authorized for that purpose by the club.

During these internal revolutions of this cosmopolitan household, John and Albert worked and lived harmoniously together. Their decisions on disputable questions generally prevailed among the members. This relation between the boy of twenty and the man of thirty-five was remarkable; no lovers could have yearned for each other's company more ardently than they.

This close friendship aroused no envy among the other members. On the contrary, it aided them in their discussions and dealings among themselves to conquer selfishness and national prejudices,

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and to find the pleasant medium which united so many persons of different nationalities and characters into one large and happy family.

It was Sunday afternoon; John and Albert were, as usual, walking home together from church. The sun shone bright, no breeze was stirring and Nature in her silent glory seemed to pray. The two friends had listened to one of Rev. Gilbert's masterly sermons on the beauty of nature and on her soothing influence upon the human heart and human passions. In recalling the speaker's eloquent thoughts, and perhaps caused thereby, Albert asked John why he had left his home in the sunny South. John recognized the motive which prompted Albert's personal question and without hesitation complied with his friend's request as follows:

"I am the youngest of three sons; I was born and brought up to manhood on

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a small plantation in Louisiana; we kept several slaves and treated them kindly, but we remained poor. The few dollars which we received for our surplus produce were insufficient to support us. The result was that my two older brothers left home before I was sixteen years old; after that my parents bestowed more care upon my education. I stayed at home until I was thirty. Our wealthy neighbor had but one child, Elma, a beautiful girl; she was attending school and subsequently college in a distant city, and was seldom at home for longer than a month.

"We were perfect strangers until she was graduated, and, tired of schooling, remained at home. Her parents and mine were equally desirous to keep us with them; this mutual desire, unknown to us, led to an understanding between our parents that we should marry. Many opportunities were devised by them to

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make us better acquainted with each other. Although she was ten years younger than I, her general education was equal, if not superior, to mine. Our conversation never lagged for the want of topics for discussion. In short, her beauty and attainments led to a declaration of love and to a proposal of marriage on my part. My proposal was accepted and our engagement was celebrated by the two families. Neither, however, had mentioned when the marriage should take place. Elated with the prospect of soon calling the beautiful girl my own, I spoke to our minister about solemnizing our marriage at the bride's home as soon as I could obtain her and her parents' consent to the exact time.

“With all the impetuosity of youth and love, I hastened to Elma for approval. I shall never forget her look of surprise and her ringing laughter at the idea that she should be married at her home and

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not in church. When she had recovered from her surprise and I was in the act of leaving her, she told me for the first time that our parents had agreed that not only our marriage should be solemnized in church, but that all the relatives of both families and the public generally should be invited to the ceremony. She and my parents well knew of my abhorrence of such public demonstrations; she was astonished that I had not been consulted on that matter. I was angry with my parents and with my betrothed for not having informed me of that compact. I told her so and she grew as angry as I was. She insisted that I knew, or should have known, of that agreement ever since our engagement. Thereupon we exchanged rings and with a polite bow I left her.

“My parents, as a reason for withholding from me so important a step, alleged that they had intended to tell me as

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soon as I, in their estimation, had fallen so deeply in love with the girl that I would not have minded the change. I could not help laughing at the ingenuity with which the love of parents for their child had conducted the campaign, which, as my mother assured me, would have been successful if I had not been in such a hurry for the wedding day.

“I kissed my mother for her loving care, shook hands with my old father, and bidding them good-bye, I left for the North.

“A photograph, which was accidentally found in one of my books by some member of our present household, was Elma’s likeness. I returned it to her without a word of explanation. This, Albert, has been my first love, and it will be my last.”

Albert pressed his friend’s hand, and the two walked silently home as if they had been mourners at the funeral of that love.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CLUB'S MAIDEN EFFORT

WHILE this world in miniature was slowly and understandingly becoming a pattern of peace and harmony, the other, larger world, "the home of the free," was trembling with the upheaval of the question of slavery. Abraham Lincoln, Nature's great son, whom she had taught in the pure atmosphere of her woods and rivulets the grandeur of herself, and who was inspired by the wisdom and love of his tutor to heal wounds, was nominated by the infant Republican party as its leader—Lucifer shuddered in his stronghold and Liberty commenced weaving the victor's wreath.

The billows of that struggle between slavery and liberty reached even as far as our friends' romantically located log

house. The words "state rights" and "secession" were sometimes mentioned during John and Albert's conversations, while returning from work, but neither anticipated any serious complications. Their intercourse was not marred in the least because John was an enthusiast for state rights and slavery while Albert favored a strong Union and the abolition of all serfdom. The care for their own existence and their deep-seated friendship suppressed any passionate outburst of feeling.

Albert was exceedingly busy after working hours in keeping the company's books and showing therein the account of each member. About that time the village school board was contemplating the erection of a new substantial brick schoolhouse in the spring, and for that purpose had received bids. The board was authorized to offer three prizes of fifteen, ten and five dollars each to the three

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persons of school age, living within the school district, who should, within a certain time, deposit with the secretary of the school board the most accurately written itemized estimate of the number of bricks it would require to build the new structure in accordance with the specifications, of which copies would be handed free of charge to any contestant.

Mr. Henry, the landlord, and his daughter, Agnes, called one evening on Mrs. Graham and her daughters, requesting them to urge Albert to compete for one of the prizes. Mr. Henry, being a member of the school board, had heard of Albert's ability as a reliable arithmetician, and being acquainted with his financial condition, considered this step an advantageous one for Albert and the school board.

In the meantime the work of grading was pushed with great vigor and better results. The pleasant mental employ-

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ment after working hours strengthened them for the manual labor on the next day. Two rainy days gave Albert an opportunity to post his books to date and to calculate the required number of bricks for the building of the new schoolhouse. He had asked the girls to compete for the prizes, offering his help, but they had emphatically declined.

Having been brought up in a city that had been chiefly built of brick, Albert had learned in school the methods pursued in ascertaining the amount of brick contained in various buildings, some of which had been larger and more complicated than the proposed schoolhouse in question; therefore the present computation was an easy task for him and took very little of his time.

The enforcement of the fines in connection with the recently established time-tables experienced but one serious difficulty when Fred Lambert, who had

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been guilty of wilful tardiness at the breakfast table, demanded a jury trial in order to determine his guilt or innocence. All members agreed to try this new method of entertainment and resolved to follow, as near as possible, the methods prescribed by law.

On the evening of the trial every one seemed excited and even the dignified John, as the presiding judge, showed signs of uneasiness. Carl Kron, who had been appointed sheriff, nervously looked over the papers that had been handed him by the two attorneys, Paul Gerard for the defendant and Ralph Bowdoin for the state. At eight o'clock the court was opened by the sheriff. John, as the judge, occupied a chair which, together with a large dry goods box, served as the judge's stand.

Upon the case of the state against Lambert being called for trial the sheriff presented the prisoner to the judge, who

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asked the prisoner whether he was rightly named and whether he wished an attorney to defend him; he answered both questions in the affirmative. The court then announced that the defendant had pleaded not guilty to a certain charge and demanded a jury trial. Whereupon the court ordered the sheriff to call a jury. In compliance therewith Sheriff Kron drew from his pocket a paper and read the names of Mrs. Graham, Albert Burdett, Mary Graham, Lou Johnson, Lucy Graham and Byron Burns. These persons named were sworn and seated, after which the trial commenced.

The first witness for the state was Carl Kron, who testified that the defendant and he were and had been for months, bedfellows; that on the day when the crime was committed he heard the morning bell for rising; that he arose and dressed and insisted that the prisoner should do likewise. Further proceedings

were interrupted by Paul Gerard announcing to the court that his client confessed having been late that morning owing to the fact that he had been kept awake during the greater part of the night by the witness's snoring. At this unexpected turn of the case great consternation prevailed in the court room; the facts were admitted, since all knew of Carl's accomplishment, which, on one night, had alarmed the entire household in the belief that the Indians had surrounded the house and were giving their war-cry before an attack.

The presiding officer, at length, decided that evidence should be taken as to the degree of noise caused by the witness's snoring, after which the attorneys should address the jury on the question whether the prisoner's excuse under the evidence was strong enough to override a clearly established violation of the law. Peter Ivan and Hugo Brenner were called as

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witnesses, one for each side, whose testimony as to the loudness of that snoring and its effect, was very conflicting.

The witty and able speeches to the jury frequently convulsed the hearers with laughter; Ralph cited instances of soldiers having been shot as punishment for falling asleep while on picket duty, and that the crime of permitting disorder to creep into a household was just as dangerous and should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Paul Gerard, on the other hand, proved by many illustrations that the snoring of a bedfellow like Carl was worse than trying to sleep in the midst of a firing battery, and that his client's falling asleep again after he had risen, was clearly an act of God and therefore not punishable by man. After completion of the arguments the judge instructed the jury, cautioning them not to be swayed by the eloquence of the attorneys, but to

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decide the case from the evidence alone. The jury then retired under the guidance of the sheriff, who had been instructed to lock them up in a safe place and keep them there on bread and water until they had agreed upon a verdict. When the sheriff left the court room with the jury he felt as if he were the prisoner, and Fred the innocent victim.

The jury returned in a very short time; upon the judge's question whether they had agreed upon a verdict, Mrs. Graham, as the jury's foreman, announced that the jury, by an unanimous vote, found the defendant guilty, but that his fine should be paid by the sheriff. This verdict capped the climax of the evening's sport. Before Paul had a chance to ask for an acquittal of the prisoner by virtue of this decision, the judge ordered the jury to reconsider the case and bring in a verdict of either guilty or not guilty, although he admitted that their verdict

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was not worse than many verdicts that had been rendered by twelve men under the instructions of a real judge. As the jury were in the act of leaving, Carl Kron stepped up and paid the fine and assumed all guilt. Thereupon Fred proposed to give three cheers for the model sheriff of the Log House Club, which were readily given and peace was restored upon the solid foundation of friendship and good will.

CHAPTER IX

THE TEST OF THE GOLDEN RULE

THE novelty of the entertainment and the peculiar charm of debate and exchange of ideas among educated persons, led to a united desire to present debatable questions of principle or fact to disinterested judges, and consequently to a repetition of the evening's exercises.

The experience of these young men in forming a household among themselves led to many strange revelations. They were all imbued with an honest desire for a peaceful and harmonious way of living together. Being educated, they had naturally, among themselves, many conversations and debates on that topic, recognizing the extreme difficulty of harmonizing the habits of each with the habits of the others. The one was orderly

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and the other disorderly; the one desired to go "early to bed and early to rise" and the other had the habit of keeping late hours of day and night; the one liked to smoke, the other hated the sight of it; the one chewed tobacco, the other sickened at the sight; the one kept himself scrupulously clean, the other was careless in that respect. In fact, they experienced the same difficulties that some lovers do after marriage. Before the final knot was tied they would willingly have died for each other, but afterwards, when all these little habits cropped out and demanded curtailing, if not extermination, these same lovers were sometimes sorry that their partner's ante-nuptial desire of dying had not been carried out.

This condition of affairs led to a determination on the part of the members to discuss at the next meeting some topic which might throw light on this difficult question of home life. Consequently,

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Albert the American, Byron the Englishman, and Fred the German, were appointed to draft a resolution on that question and have it presented at the next meeting. They produced the following:

“Resolved, that no member of a household shall exercise a habit within the jurisdiction of the family that he would disapprove if all the other members should exercise the same habit.”

At supper the resolution was enthusiastically accepted. Upon John’s suggestion three judges were appointed, Rev. Gilbert, a superannuated minister residing in the village; Mr. Henry, the landlord; and Mr. Carney, a young teacher from the city.

Great preparations were made for the meeting, which was to be held on the next Thursday evening. The speeches were not to exceed ten minutes each, and every member was compelled to contribute.

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On the appointed evening the boys stopped work one hour sooner than usual. After supper the dining-room was put in perfect order. The judges arrived at seven thirty o'clock; John called the meeting to order and introduced the resolution with a few remarks in which he emphasized its importance and declared that, if the resolution could be carried out, it would revolutionize every household in the land. The authors of the resolution were then asked to take the affirmative, to which they readily agreed. They ably argued the necessity of a reform in the conduct of a household, illustrating their points by many facts which could not be disputed, whereas the other male members, while approving a great deal of what was said, pronounced the enforcement of the resolution an impossible task, as equally impossible to enforce as the "Golden Rule," its twin sister, enacted about two thousand

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years ago, taught by innumerable teachers, churchmen and laymen, and which is still almost a dead letter to-day.

Every one felt that the decision was trembling in the balance and the interest in the final outcome grew stronger with every argument.

Mrs. Graham and her daughters were now called. Lucy and Mary, in a few words, informed the chairman that they had appointed their mother to speak for them, and that they would stand by their mother's opinion. The girls were applauded and the call for Mrs. Graham was repeated. She obeyed, and as she approached the judges, her face was a shade paler than usual and her voice slightly faltering in the beginning; but as soon as she had touched the first principle underlying the resolution, she grew enthusiastic and entirely forgot self in the great subject which she was about to dissect for the purpose of proving

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its merits. She was emphatically in favor of the resolution. In support of her views she gave a brief history of the condition of her household as it existed prior to her appointment as a committee for directing a division of labor, and of the gratifying results of its observance. She stated that during the brief trial of carrying out the former resolution the boys and girls had become more orderly; that no time had been lost in looking for misplaced articles; that greater care had been taken in leaving the mud outside where it belonged; in hiding the revolting habit of chewing gum or tobacco, or abstaining from those habits altogether; of keeping the smoke of tobacco from the living-room; of enjoying more time for recreation and study, and of doing many other kind acts, which had the tendency of lessening labor and increasing happiness in the family circle.

Mrs. Graham admitted that the resolu-

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tion was a subdivision of the Golden Rule; she claimed, however, that the former was far easier obeyed than the latter for the reason that the resolution applied to the members of a family only, whereas the Golden Rule applied to all mankind. In conclusion she asserted that the Golden Rule had been in their household a living power from which had flown so much happiness and faith in the nobility of mankind, that she dreaded to think of the future when the source of all that happiness would cease, and the ties that bind them now would be severed.

At this instant she paused a moment. The stillness of the grave prevailed, while the blowing of the wind without sounded like the nation's wail over an approaching calamity.

"Honorable Judges," she continued with a visible effort to control her voice, "should this resolution pass and be acted upon in every family it would not do

away with all misery; there would still be many families in which drinking, smoking, scolding, swearing and kindred vices would be practiced, but the discussion in each family on the resolution would cause untold good and prove a blessing."

The speaker retired amidst applause in which the judges joined. In rendering their decision in favor of the affirmative, Rev. Gilbert approved the judges' applauding, by confessing that the spirit of union had been so vividly impressed upon them by Mrs. Graham that they were compelled to apply it to their decision as a board, although it had been expected that at least one dissenting vote would be cast.

Thereupon the landlord arose and complimented the minister for having mentioned the one "expected dissenting vote." He further acknowledged that he loved to smoke and drink, and, but for Mrs. Graham's reference to facts which

had occurred within the log house family, he should have cast a dissenting vote. He insisted that his habits of smoking and drinking did not hinder him from presenting the resolution to his family and if they were as willing as he was to surrender some of their distasteful habits for the common good, he might, even at his advanced age, stop smoking and drinking. The jovial landlord also received a hearty applause from the audience and a good hand-shaking from the minister.

Mr. Carney, the teacher, recommended passing a law compelling every minister to preach at least fifty sermons each year on the topic under discussion, citing facts and illustrations to be taken from life's inexhaustible supply, as Mrs. Graham had done, and letting the idealistic heaven, with its hair-splitting issues, which are, as a rule, based upon mere trifles, take care of itself, while endeavor-

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ing to build a heaven in each family here below.

The social time following the close of the exercises was the reflection of the heaven that each had resolved to build within the temple of his future home. When through the remarkable stillness of the hour the guests heard the tolling of the midnight bell in the distant city, they at once made preparations to leave and instinctively turned to Rev. Gilbert for a benediction.

"No, my friends," exclaimed the reverend gentleman, "the utterances of thanks from human lips, after such a feast of reason and in such a majestic splendor of the night, would sound like mockery."

The myriads of worlds in the milky-way accepted the tribute with becoming modesty.

CHAPTER X

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES

PRIOR to the events stated in the last chapter, a few of the members had habitually gone to the village bar-room after supper to kill time and enjoy a smoke, although the log house contained a special room for smoking. The recent agitation of woman's rights and the sensible action of the women of joining in the deliberation of that important question, led to the sudden change of keeping all members at home that they might participate in the evening's pastimes, instead of inhaling the smoke-laden atmosphere of the village bar-room and listening to the coarse jokes of still coarser men. Elated with the exercises at home and ashamed to steal away from them for the sake of yielding to injurious habits, they were soon convinced

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that the easiest way to rid themselves of all trouble caused by the interruption of habits which they themselves denounced as undesirable, was to drop them entirely.

Especially invited by Rev. Gilbert, who preached on every other Sunday morning in the village schoolhouse, the club decided to attend church in a body on the next Sunday.

The aged minister had heard of the remarkable effects of the workings of the club upon the young persons. Fully recognizing the power of such educating forces without harboring the egotistical dogmas of some of his brethren, he had invited the club, as his co-laborers in the spiritual world, to attend his church. In conversation with John and Albert, he maintained that such intellectual pleasures as they practiced were indispensable to a full enjoyment of life, and were a sure preventive on the part of the young from acquiring the "bad habits"

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of life, which, he insisted, were in reality sins that undermine health, waste time, weaken manhood, cause poverty and lead to premature old age and death. Such was also the tenor of his sermon which he delivered on the next Sabbath after the little cracked school bell had rung the third time and the choir had sung two hymns, the melodies of which proved that a master mind had composed the music and that a master mind had selected them to be sung on that occasion. The congregation was large, a great many farmers attended, and the room was filled when our friends entered.

The speaker's venerable appearance, his gray hair and bright eyes, formed a strange but pleasing contrast; his voice was weak yet clear and could be heard and understood in the farthest part of the room: he shunned all hackneyed phrases behind which mediocrity in the pulpit generally hides itself, and he

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repeatedly cited apt illustrations as his predecessor in Judea had done about two thousand years before, until bigotry, mixed with hatred and stupidity, had nailed Him to the cross. Among other illustrations he skillfully pictured the mental revolutions within the Log House Club without naming it, the rapid progress of its members and their enhanced pleasures of life by virtue thereof.

Pleased with this public recognition by the esteemed pastor, each member strove harder to merit the praise. Mary and Lucy Graham, under their mother's guidance and under the tutorship of Albert and Byron, were constantly advancing in the art of housekeeping and mathematics, much to the delight of Albert and Byron, who in addition found time to instruct the girls in all the other common branches which were required to be taught in the common schools.

Albert had submitted his estimate of

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the material for the new schoolhouse and was notified that at the next meeting of the school board the contest would be decided and that the presence of all the contestants was desired. This news caused quite an excitement among Albert's friends, who esteemed the young man's uncompromising honesty and his ever cheerful temper and helping hand.

On the evening of the meeting the entire club attended. Albert's natural modesty and his dread of appearing to parade his attainments caused him at first to decide to stay at home; but this was not permitted. His friends knew that a public recognition of his work in his presence would be to him more in the nature of a punishment than a reward. "Duty calls you," said John. "Take courage, Albert!" added Mrs. Graham, whose kind voice convinced him that his motives in refusing to go had been fully understood.

The president of the school board

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opened the meeting by the introduction of Mr. H., a celebrated architect from the city, who expressed his pleasure at observing the interest taken by the village in the new schoolhouse, and stated that he had been called to examine the estimates which had been submitted, and that, with the aid of the school board and the two teachers of the village school, he had carefully examined each estimate and that the following named persons were entitled to the prizes in the order named:

“Albert Burdett, Hugh Perrin and Grace Simms.” He further remarked that Albert’s computation was even more precise than the one made by the former architect.

The president thereupon distributed the prizes and the audience cheered. Order being restored, Albert arose and thanked the school board and the architect for the decision and added that he,

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as a friend of the public schools which had taught him to solve the computation so readily, would donate the prize just received toward a fund for the betterment of teachers' salaries within the district.

This unexpected donation, uttered with a firmness of voice and action that disarmed any remonstrance, made Albert with one accord, besides the "Hero of the Cabin" the "Hero of the School." The public recognition that Albert had dreaded was bestowed on him so spontaneously and heartily, and in such quantities, that Mrs. Graham half consolingly and half mischievously pressed his hand, and her daughter, Mary, exclaimed, "Poor Albert."

What signified Mary's sympathetic voice and the flames darting from her deep blue eyes as she gazed on Albert's radiant face? What made him involuntarily shrink from her as he would from a person with an infectious disease,

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when she pressed his hand as her mother had done? The orphaned boy, reared in the school of care, whose young shoulders had borne the brunt of battle for the existence of a family, knew nothing of the love which, with the rapidity of lightning and with the force of an avalanche, captures its victim for good or for evil, for a heaven on earth or for a grave in its bosom.

On the next morning at breakfast, John related that news had been received the evening before that, at the fight which had taken place in the cabin on the evening that Albert had left it, one of the combatants had received a wound of which he had died, and that the murderer had been arrested.

Mrs. Graham's remark that "the wages of sin is death" was probably never more forcibly illustrated before these young men than it was on that morning when they were still rejoicing at Albert's

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self-denial of the previous evening, and at the same time heard, as a striking contrast, of the murderer's arrest as a part payment of his sin meted out by the unfailing Nemesis.

One of Albert's duties as secretary was to take a preliminary survey of the work of grading that had been done since he arrived. This survey showed a considerable proportional gain over that done during any of the preceding periods; nor was Albert's measurement of the work questioned by the railroad company, whose president and secretary, after being informed of the strange movement of reform among the members of the club, attributed the large increase of completed work to the increased strength of each individual as a natural consequence of that reform, and notified the club of this conclusion in a neat note when the contract price was paid.

When pay day came John and Albert,

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furthermore, made the division of the money among the members, with the help of the completed books, within an exceedingly short time to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Discussing this agreeable change on pay day, Byron Burns, the ex-secretary, remarked that if death is the wages of sin, then more money is the wages of a better system of bookkeeping. For this indirect acknowledgment of his own failing as the former secretary, he received his comrades' warm congratulations, although they well knew that the increased pay had come from increased work only.

CHAPTER XI

SECESSION AND UNION

THE political agitation at that time became more and more acute in the same ratio as the intention of the South to secede from the North became more and more apparent. The effect upon the club was also marked, and the discussions on that subject were slightly tinged with the acrimony of the slaveholders and their friends.

Under these conditions the club decided to submit the question of state rights and the right of secession to the unprejudiced members, who were Mrs. Graham and her daughters, Carl Kron, Hugo Brenner and Lou Johnson, none having expressed an opinion on that point, nor had they taken any part in its discussion.

On the evening set for the debate the club was still evenly divided, the unpreju-

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diced members had not given the matter any consideration at all, while the other six had carefully prepared for the defense of their sides on this all-absorbing question.

It was now October, 1860; three candidates for President were in the field, and John Brown's spirit was moving onward and demanded abolition of slaves. Abraham Lincoln's convincing arguments through which shone his unbiased patriotism and love of man, made converts every day for the ideal of liberty; while in the background stood the grinning skeleton "War," fanning the passion of man into a whirlwind of hatred; making brother curse brother and severing ties between father and son, and between mother and child.

Over the young nation hung a shroud ready to smother the aspirations of equal rights, and bury the republic as other republics had been buried before.

Several citizens from the village had asked permission to attend the debate, which had been readily granted. Albert's strange but noble action of presenting the prize money to the teachers' fund had caused several of its citizens to subscribe also, and on the preceding evening the school board had accepted the entire sum and safely invested it at a good rate of interest.

At eight o'clock in the evening Rev. Gilbert, who was the presiding officer at the meeting, opened the exercises with a few fitting remarks and stated the pending resolution, namely: "Resolved, that the constitution of the United States prohibits the seceding of any of its states."

The arguments were brief, therefore to the point and interesting, and were listened to with close attention. Each side tried to bend the written word of the constitution in order to prove that his version of it was the right one.

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Albert's closing speech carried the day when he pointed to Europe, a country about the size of the United States, with its many independent governments and its many wars which necessitated the creation of large standing armies at a fearful expense and loss of labor. He especially pointed to Germany's condition before and during the "Thirty Years' War;" to her fifty or more independent states at that time and to the consequent warfare among themselves, which in the seventeenth century led almost to her entire destruction.

The speaker then pictured what the probable results would be if each state were permitted to secede; the many controversies among states which might easily lead to war, such as the restricting of commerce between the states; of border line disputes; of slavery; of criminals committing crimes in one state and escaping into the other; of the coin-

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age of money; of the tariff and of many other causes that would be sowing the seeds of the horrors of future battle-fields, as Europe has been doing since it was entered by the white race.

The decision was unanimously in favor of the affirmative; even John, the lover of the South and its institutions, admitted to Rev. Gilbert that a multiplicity of governments within the limits of the United States might easily lead to the results described by Albert.

CHAPTER XII

CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS AND THE ULL BEFORE THE STORM

IN November, 1860, Lincoln was elected President of the United States. The want of unity in the Democratic ranks which led to the placing of two Democratic candidates for the presidency in the field, had caused that party's defeat. John accepted the situation with a dignified reserve and complimented Albert upon the acquisition of another illustration proving the fatal results of disunion, while Albert, grieved his friend's defeat, pressed his hand.

Winter was approaching rapidly. On several mornings his outpost, King Frost, had taken possession of the grading and kept the members of the club from working and made them fear of losing the ten per cent. of the earnings which

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had been kept back by the railroad company.

In order to keep all hands employed during the cold spell they made preparations to chop the five hundred cords of wood for which the railroad company had agreed to make monthly payments. Axes were purchased, an old grindstone, which had been left by the former owner of the house, was placed upon a frame, several young hickory trees were chopped down and made into axe handles. In fact, everything was prepared to meet King Frost and still live comfortably.

Albert's financial condition was considerably improved by his additional monthly salary of ten dollars. Still he, with the rest of the club, needed the ten per cent., hence they hailed with delight a change of weather that enabled them to complete their contract on the day before a terrific snow storm put an end to all further grading during that winter.

Grateful for their good luck, although only hard work had forced success, they decided to celebrate the approaching Christmas in royal style. Their winter's work secured, their evening's entertainments and their Sundays became more interesting as the members became more proficient in their English and more patient in their respective defeats during the many mental tournaments through which they passed. The foreigners among them seized every opportunity of learning English and the Americans were equally eager to learn European conditions and languages.

There was a lull in the affairs of the Union and patriots were hopeful, if not confident, that the genial, warm-hearted and wise Lincoln would find ways and means of keeping the Union together. No one in the North anticipated that the final removal of slavery was so close at hand, nor that its removal would require

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the sword; and no member of the club had the least reason for calling this profound ebb of political excitement the lull before the storm.

At a meeting of the club the matter of celebrating Christmas was thoroughly discussed. Opinions differed widely; but after Fred's vivid description of the German way, that method was chosen, and a committee of three was appointed, of which Fred was chairman, to attend to the preparation of a Christmas tree. The adjoining woods furnished a tree and the distant city furnished the candles, trimmings and presents necessary to carry out the plan. During the week before Christmas every member acted mysteriously, while endeavoring to hide the presents that were to be a surprise on Christmas. The girls were busy with needlework and seemed to work day and night; even Mrs. Graham, usually extremely sedate, entered into the spirit of

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joyful expectancy and had cheering words for all.

This spirit of cheer and good will was even noticed by Carlo, the girls' faithful dog, their protector on errands to the village and in rambles through the woods. He had hitherto kept a respectful distance from Mrs. Graham and the men, but, attracted by their changed looks and kinder voices, he dropped the memory of former unpleasantness, and became a member of the cheerful circle.

On Christmas eve the committee completed the beautifying of the tree that had been placed upon a small table in the corner of the dining-room. A hundred candles were fastened to its branches; gold and silver trimmings shone through its dark green foliage, while from every part of the tree rosy-cheeked apples and gilded nuts promised future reward.

It was almost midnight; the members had long since returned from the festivi-

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ties in the village, when Fred cast a last searching glance over the result of his memory and his artistic skill. A spark of the bliss which the Creator must have felt at beholding His own handiwork, this beautiful world, swept over Fred and perchance consoled also a longing mother in the old world.

It had been agreed to celebrate the home festivities on the evening of Christmas day. Such an arrangement enabled the club to attend the exercises in the village on Christmas eve and on the following morning listen to Rev. Gilbert's sermon. After a late dinner on Christmas, while twilight was setting in and Rev. Gilbert and his grandchild, Agnes, were visiting with Mrs. Graham and her daughters, the committee lighted the candles, removed the concealing curtains and extinguished all other lights. In the glare of the candles, the three girls, Agnes, Mary and Lucy, sang a beautiful

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Christmas anthem; then John announced that Santa Claus had left the presents around the tree as he had done in other homes for more than two thousand years. John and Lucy then distributed these tokens of love and friendship. The thanks which were uttered to the unknown givers sounded like another anthem to the spirit of joy and love. The crowning event was the presentation by John of a securely wrapped choice piece of meat to his new friend, Carlo. The dog was now a favorite of all; he had wonderingly observed the excitement of his friends, evidently failing to comprehend the cause of their strange behavior, but as soon as John handed him the package, he removed the paper with one stroke of his sharp teeth, put one paw upon the meat and with uplifted head gave such a bark of joy and satisfaction that every one broke into a spontaneous outburst of merriment and

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wonder, which afforded Carlo sufficient time to swallow his present and then join the company's mirth.

Rev. Gilbert's parting words at the close of the festival were as beautiful as they were true. Thanking his friends for the appropriate gift which he had received from them, a long wished for book, he asserted that a universal celebration of Christmas in the spirit and manner in which it had been celebrated by them, would make wars impossible. That such messages of peace and love would disarm hatred, envy and greed, and tend to establish in both giver and recipient, a habit of expressing more often in words and deeds the love and kindness we harbor for each other, and thus pave the way for charity to aid us in molding our judgments and for love to make us forget and forgive.

The work of chopping wood continued with renewed vigor after the holidays.

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Every member of this little ideal republic felt the steady growth of hand and brain. They were expecting to enter new lines of employment in the spring. Mary intended to teach, Lucy to attend school; Albert had accepted an offer from the village school board as assistant teacher; Fred was to teach French and German in a southern college; Carl Kron, Hugo Brenner and Lou Johnson were to go further west and pre-empt large tracts of land within a short distance of a thriving village; Byron Burns expected a professorship in algebra as soon as the political excitement abated; Ralph Bowdoin and Paul Gerard were determined to continue their law studies and enter an office for that purpose; John desired to return to his parents in Louisiana, and Paul Ivan, an expert on the violin, intended to go to California, and there practice his art at better pay.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MURDER TRIAL

ON Monday of the second week of the new year Albert was subpoenaed to attend the district court on the next day and testify as a witness for the state in a criminal proceeding against Riley who had been indicted for murder and whose trial would be had on that day. This event came as unexpected as a stroke of lightning on a cloudless day, and caused a considerable agitation among our friends. At the meeting which was held that evening and which Carlo found a way to attend in the hope of a repetition of his surprise on Christmas, it was decided that all members, excepting Mrs. Graham and Carlo, should attend the trial, and that a conveyance should be engaged at the expense of the club.

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On Tuesday morning, long before daylight, the eleven members, comfortably seated in a sleigh partly filled with hay, left their home. Mrs. Graham shouted a good-bye and Carlo, securely fastened in the wood-house, howled so dismally that both girls begged that the dog might be allowed to go with them. Their wish would have been granted had the distance not been so great and Mrs. Graham had not been left alone.

Arrived at the county seat Albert reported at once to the prosecuting attorney who questioned him about the affair in the Irish cabin on the evening he had left it so suddenly. During this examination Albert learned to his sorrow that the murdered man had been the Irish boss who had come to his rescue. At ten o'clock in the forenoon a jury was called. The court room was by this time completely filled since the case had attracted a good deal of attention. The presence

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of the "Log House Club," which the local press at the county seat had frequently mentioned and of which Albert was known to be a member and the main witness in the present case, had aroused a great deal of interest among the population. Albert's unselfish deed of returning to the school board the well earned prize had also been published and commented upon by the same paper and had created among its readers a desire to see and hear the boy who, in their opinion, was either a crank or else the possessor of material from which heroes are made.

The selection, examination and final acceptance of the jury occupied the entire forenoon. The defendant's attorney, a slim, keen-witted, middle-aged man, succeeded several times in having jurors rejected whose answers to the questions propounded by the state's attorney as to their qualifications, seemed to indicate a prejudice against the accused. The

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proceedings during the entire forenoon proved of great interest to Albert and his friends, nearly all of whom had been acting as jurors during the different trials by the club. Their conversation at dinner was very animated and in the nature of a trial of the two opposing attorneys, pronouncing the state's attorney to be a gentleman and denouncing the defendant's attorney as a member of the opposite class.

The afternoon session commenced with a brief address to the jury by the state's attorney, in which he stated the circumstances that led to the murder; the defendant's attorney followed, addressing the jury by stating facts, which, if proved, would establish the plea of self-defense and liberate the defendant.

Albert was the first witness on behalf of the state; the presiding judge, an elderly gentleman whose wrinkled face resembled a battle-field, administered the

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oath, and the taking of the testimony began.

An almost oppressive silence prevailed in the court room when Albert testified; one could with ease have heard the proverbial pin drop. His testimony, which no earthly power could have changed, related to what we already know, ending with the description of defendant's attitude as he, with the uplifted jug, struck at the witness's head, but failed of its mark.

The defendant's attorney now began the cross-examination. Albert was compelled to give almost a complete biography of himself, the reasons for his coming West, for seeking an employment to which he was not accustomed, for engaging himself with a company of railroad men whose universal custom was and had been, as he and every one else knew, to use liquor habitually. Albert's answers to all the cross-questions were

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promptly and unhesitatingly given. His friends rejoiced at his able way of grasping and counteracting the many questions that had been asked for the very purpose of misleading the witness.

At last, the defendant's attorney, in his most friendly tone, resembling a cat's purring before she swallows the captured mouse, asked the following question:

"You have admitted that the defendant on that evening had been drinking heavily; that he had been acting like a drunken man; that he had been asking you to drink with him and upon your refusal to drink asked you to tell him the reason for your refusal, and that you had been sleepy and insisted upon going to bed. Now, explain to the court and jury why you did not either comply with his request to drink, no matter how much or how little, or else tell him the reason for your strange actions and thus end the unpleasant situation."

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Albert hesitated as he had done on that fatal evening; the defense was jubilant; the state's attorney objected to the question for several reasons, all of which were attacked by the defense and branded as a shield for perjury. The judge, after reflection, decided that, under the peculiar circumstances, the witness must answer, and overruled the state's objections to the question. The defendant's attorney could not suppress a broad smile of satisfaction while the prosecutor was correspondingly depressed. Albert looked imploringly at the judge and asked,

“Must I answer that question?”

“You must,” replied the judge in a wavering voice, while the wrinkles in his intellectual face seemed to fight another battle. Albert turned his eyes from the judge and with a visible effort faced the jury. The painful silence in the court room seemed to be the foreboding of some approaching evil and

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everyone felt that the life or death of one human being depended upon the coming answer, since none but Albert could give testimony to defeat the plea of self-defense.

Slowly and distinctly Albert answered; he told of his father's unbridled passion for strong drink; how his mother had suffered as a result, as long as he could remember; of his father's death; of his mother's poverty; of her broken health and of her death; that she, during her last moments, made him promise that he would never taste a drop of liquor knowingly, whereupon she had kissed him and then dropped dead in his arms. The memory of that scene brought tears to his eyes and he paused a moment. Mothers in the audience wept like children. The simplicity with which the tragedy was told convinced every hearer of its truthfulness. Albert further told the jury that on the night in the cabin

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a higher power seemed to have prevented him from mentioning in such company the promise he had made to his dying mother, and that he had preferred to act the coward's part and flee rather than to soil her memory.

The defendant's attorney moved to strike the answer from the records. This motion gave rise to a lengthy legal battle in which the defendant's counsel made several hidden thrusts involving Albert's veracity and calling the excuse in his testimony a cute invention of a biased witness. Then the unexpected, but yet the simplest solution of the pending question, occurred. The prisoner had been the most attentive listener of the proceedings. During Albert's explanation a wonderful change came over him; his stolid face gradually changed and brightened, he felt that every word that Albert had spoken was true; he thought of his own wife in old Ireland

and of the baby boy whom he had never seen, and a mysterious longing welled up in him to have his own boy as good and brave as was the boy in the witness chair. He heard the attorneys debate about something the boy had said and what the law should say, but their talk was no more understood by him than if it had been Greek. He looked at the judge, at his scarred face molded in just such trials as this, he looked at the jury, at men like himself, he looked at the abused witness with a father's love, and the genius of the hour made him arise, address the court and then turn to the jury and say:

“That boy,” pointing to Albert, “spoke the truth. I meant to hit him, but hit Mike instead, who came to help the boy. Do with me what you like, but stop my lawyer abusing that boy.”

The words, uttered with a loud and firm voice and with an Irish accent, acted upon the judge, jury and audience with

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the force of a thunderbolt. The audience arose and applauded, the jury shook hands with the defendant, while the judge, lawyers and other officers of the court acted as if they had been paralyzed. After the judge had admonished the audience not to disturb the further proceedings of the court the defendant's attorney asked to be excused from the further attendance in the case. The request was cheerfully granted. The defendant's admission of guilt in open court was duly docketed, after which the court adjourned for the day.

On leaving the court house the members of the Log House Club attracted a great deal of attention, and none more than Albert, who, with Mary and Lucy, was the first one to reach the street, which was packed with people discussing the recent events.

Suddenly a large dog made its way through the crowd toward the court-

house steps, where the two girls were waiting for the other members. Seeing them, the dog, frantically yelping, jumped at and around them as if he were mad. A bystander had drawn his revolver and would have shot the apparently mad dog if there had been no danger of shooting the girls. When the girls cried out, "Carlo," and hugged and petted the dog, making it difficult to decide who was mad, the would-be savior put up his weapon in disgust.

It was Carlo; a piece of the rope with which he had been tied was still around his neck. The dog, as Mrs. Graham said later, was in a desperate mood after the girls had left; he would not touch food of any kind nor was he susceptible to any caresses, but would lie in a corner with half-closed eyes as if he were contemplating death by starvation. The next time Mrs. Graham had occasion to look after the dog he was gone; the rope

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with which he had been tied was chewed in two and a broken window indicated how he had made his escape.

Arriving at the hotel, supper was ordered by John for the entire company of which Carlo had now become the most famed member. When they were seated around the table with Carlo placed between Lucy and Mary, he having a foot-stool for a table, the judge entered the dining-room, saluted the members and asked to be their guest. The request was cheerfully granted by all but Carlo, whose objections were stopped by Lucy assuring him that the judge had not been the guilty party. During the meal the wit, humor and penetrating thoughts made the supper a feast. Every one was at his best; the quick ending of a suit that might have lasted weeks, the prisoner's courage and noble manhood, and Carlo's attachment for his protégés were incentives that produced a flood of intellectual light,

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which is still remembered by the survivors.

At the parting, after he had shaken hands with every member, even with Carlo whose reluctant forepaw was guided by Lucy, the judge, in the act of opening the door, turned to his new friends and thanked them for the evening's entertainment which, as he assured them, had brought back to him the memory of his youth with all its glittering ideals, its hard fought triumphs and its stern defeats, and that he would always keep alive that memory until the great artist of the universe saw fit to will otherwise.

Did the Great Spirit waft his "Amen" to these red-cheeked boys and girls and make them speechless? Or did the eloquence of old age penetrate their future and show them the mounds on hillside and dale under which would soon sleep the bravest of their generation? Who dare answer and withdraw the curtain

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which mercifully covers our future weal and woe?

The joyous company at the table was suddenly changed to the sober, matter-of-fact one of parting. John requested the bill, but was told that everything had been paid and that the horses had just been hitched up ready for their homeward journey. John insisted upon knowing who had paid their bill, but the landlord claimed ignorance, assuring him that everything was all right and that the party who had sent the money had refused to give his name.

Riley was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for manslaughter; the sentence was so light on account of the mitigating circumstances and his voluntary confession of guilt. After six months he was pardoned, enlisted in the Union Army and served during the entire war; was twice wounded, honorably discharged, and is now drawing a good-

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sized pension. His oldest son became one of the best criminal lawyers of his state, and in citing his father's experience he has stopped many culprits on their way to the gallows.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CREATION OF HOME GUARDS AND THE ECHO OF THE FIRING ON FORT SUMTER

ON December 20, 1860, South Carolina declared her secession. The leaders had determined to secede ever since John Brown's daring attack on slavery had been made and the marked sympathy with him and his aim had been noticed by the friends of slavery. The trouble in Kansas in 1859 had also served as a prelude to the war of secession and had logically paved the way to the final solution of the question of slavery in the United States. South Carolina's example of proclaiming her independence was followed in quick succession by the other Southern states, while the government lay in a trance, and the North still believed in a peaceful solution of the trouble.

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Our friends, notwithstanding the many ominous reports that the South was preparing for war, shared the same confidence; and even John had been of that opinion until his own state had seceded and he had received a letter from home. On the evening of the following day, while still at supper, John announced his determination to go South, giving as his reasons that serious complications among his relatives compelled his presence.

This news was received with genuine sorrow and consternation. John had been the backbone of the pleasant union of so many men of different nationalities and characters, and fears were entertained that his withdrawal might mean the end of the association. Albert seemed to suffer the most; to him, John had been brother, father, and the unselfish kind friend who, from the evening at the hotel to the present, had been his constant adviser.

The approaching parting cast a gloom over the entire household; Mrs. Graham's steps were less elastic; no girl's laughter cheered the men at meal-time; and even Fred, the ever cheerful and ready spokesman, found no words in English to express his feelings, and half angrily said at the table, when reaching for his last cup of coffee, "Yes, Scheiden that weh!"

On the morning of John's departure he, in company with Albert, called on Rev. Gilbert to bid him good-bye. The old gentleman, holding John's hand, replied in a prophetic tone of voice, "Not good-bye, my friend, but farewell! May your blood not swell the tide which must flow before the light will dawn."

"Farewell then," said John, strangely agitated, and both friends left the patriarch in gloomy silence.

It was now ten o'clock in the morning of an ideal winter's day; the sun shone

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bright, the sleighing was good, and the Mississippi, which they had to cross in order to get to the railroad station, was safely frozen. The same conveyance that had brought them to the Riley trial had been engaged again. All went, including Mrs. Graham and Carlo. The dog's capers, when he learned that he had been included, knew no bounds, and dispelled in part the melancholy which such a parting creates. The return from the city resembled a funeral rather than the return of a group of healthy young men and women to their pleasant home; even Carlo cut no more capers, but now and then looked inquiringly up to Albert.

John had paid in full for the use of the conveyance and thus had prevented his friends from the consolation of having brought the last little sacrifice in behalf of their leader and ever unselfish friend.

Mary and Lucy endeavored to console Albert, who remained silent and who

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could not suppress the feeling as if he had been attending John's funeral. He could not forget Rev. Gilbert's parting words, so full of mystery and woe; nor could he forget Mrs. Graham's utterance of the foreboding words that death is the wages of sin; and now that his friend had gone to a land in which slavery, the blackest crime of a liberty-loving nation, was still practised, he felt that the tide of blood to which Rev. Gilbert had referred, would be required to wipe out that crime, and that the blood of his dearest friend on earth would be a part.

Arriving home, Albert soon found an antidote for that oppressive feeling, namely, work! Work with hand and brain! He remembered that on a sultry day in June a cloud, which seemed to wrap the universe in gloom and darkness, had suddenly opened and disclosed a magnificent spectacle of light fighting darkness for supremacy. The contest

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was brief but decisive; light triumphed! The dark cloud was transferred into the blissful rain, and soon the sun, in renewed glory, shone again.

What a wonderful mechanism is the human brain to be able to draw from its myriads of impressions just those which serve to heal the wounded heart!

Albert occupied in the Graham family the place of a brother and son. Mrs. Graham ordered him about in such a natural way that Albert obeyed orders with the same readiness with which he had obeyed his mother; Mary and Lucy came to him not only with their difficult questions in grammar, arithmetic and other branches, but also with those little troubles and achievements that are of interest only to the members of a family.

Mary's conduct towards him was markedly changed in one respect since the evening of the school-directors' meeting

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and the award of prizes. She had never before been intimately acquainted with any young man; she recognized in Albert the ideal of all manly virtues, her own personality was powerfully attracted by that of Albert's; she often forced herself from pondering over the language of his eyes, which language she longed to be in her favor. When on that eventful evening at the school-directors' meeting, she met him and touched his hand, the omnipotent power of her own love broke all fetters and she concentrated in one look the love she felt for him, and searched in his eyes for a response, but found therein only a frightened surprise and a brother's love. Thereafter she fought the outbursts of her passionate love with all the strength of a stern conviction, and in so doing sometimes wounded Albert's friendly and brotherly approaches.

Mary was not beautiful; her features

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were irregular, and in repose might be classed with the commonplace faces that we see every day; but when aroused by anger, pity or love, a wonderful change came over them; her eyes would dilate and glow and every lineament of her face would express the power of her feeling within. Thus it happened that she looked at times like a Medusa and sometimes like an Aphrodite; between these two extremes she appeared what she really was, a sensible, obedient daughter, a calm reasoner and a faithful friend.

In February, 1861, the states which had seceded, united and declared an Independent Southern Republic, with Jefferson Davis as their president. The effect upon the North was powerful and the belief in a settlement of the difficulties without bloodshed became more and more hopeless. Patriotic men of all political parties prepared for the worst. It became known that during the late Democratic

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rule many weapons and other material of war had been distributed over the South, whereas the North had been left void of such weapons and material.

Since John's return to the South, the political movements were followed more closely than before by the people in the village and by the members of the club. Rumors of depredations committed by Indians, or men dressed as Indians, reached those scattered communities on the outskirts of civilization, of which this was one, and created a considerable stir among them, especially since it was reported and believed that these depredations were originated and supported by the southern slaveholders for the purpose of preventing the North from interfering with their movement of secession.

At a public meeting held in the village, it was determined to form a company of home guards for the protection of the inhabitants against such marauding

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tribes; and to have its members provided with arms and ammunition at the expense of the village. Seventeen young men offered themselves on that very evening to become members of such a company and were accepted.

All the men of the club had joined. Hugo, the ex-Prussian soldier, the only person in the village who knew anything about military matters, was chosen captain. During the week the company increased to twenty-five members, after which the drilling commenced. Every available rifle in the village and the vicinity was surrendered to the company, and target shooting became the order of the day whenever a sufficient amount of powder and lead could be obtained. Signals, by firing guns, were agreed upon in case of a sudden attack, and the government was petitioned for proper arms and ammunition.

One evening in April, 1861, the signals

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agreed upon were fired in rapid succession, and every member of the Home Guards grasped his rifle and what ammunition he could find and hastened to the village schoolhouse. No enemy was in sight, no other commotion was visible except the excitement caused by the shooting. As soon as the company was assembled Rev. Gilbert stepped forward and, as the reason for the alarm, stated that the postmaster had received a dispatch, the contents of which he deemed of such importance that it should be immediately made known to the members in order that they might prepare for the emergency. With trembling hands he then unfolded a piece of paper and read: "Fort Sumter has been fired upon by the Secessionists." Turning to the excited audience he said that the firing of those cannons meant war; that murder was now legalized by this overt act of the South; that Mr. Lincoln, with all

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his love for humanity and his faith in a final adjustment of the difficulties without bloodshed, would now be compelled to ask the patriots of the Nation to save the Union. That he would and must ask them to offer their lives upon the altar of their homes and country.

Silence followed this stunning news; the unexpected message and Rev. Gilbert's unfaltering certainty of an impending war seemed to have paralyzed those present. Finally, the captain was called upon to give his views as to what steps should be taken under such conditions, whether the company would be in duty bound to go if called upon, and kindred questions. Hugo's answer was brief but to the point:

"We shall continue to learn keeping step and shooting straight, and if we are called upon to shoot slaveholders instead of marauding Indians, what is the difference?"

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Applause followed his words; other members of the company expressed themselves in the same tenor. It was finally resolved to continue to perfect themselves as a military organization and to request immediate aid from the state.

CHAPTER XV

THE DEMON OF WAR LET LOOSE

THE firing of those cannons caused a general depression of business and almost an entire cessation of improvements and activity in educational matters. The war-cloud overshadowed every enterprise that was not directly connected with the resistance and suppression of the rebellious element; consequently our friends' expectations of entering new and more congenial fields of labor in the spring were doomed to die.

A few days after, the news of President Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers for the suppression of the Rebellion reached them. It was criticized by some as a call for too many troops and by others as a call for not enough. During May, 1861, the Union forces achieved a few victories in the

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East and West, causing the North to expect a rapid termination of the war and a complete subjugation of the seceded states.

The club shared in this expectation. The new schoolhouse was to be built during the summer and opened in September, 1861. The members of the club had closed their wood contract and had engaged in another of grading; Mrs. Graham had secured from the railroad company, on easy terms, the log house and the acre of land on which it was located; Mary had passed her teacher's examination and intended to teach the next fall term in the village.

Everything about them looked hopeful excepting the condition of Rev. Gilbert's health. He had been obliged to give up preaching on account of lung trouble, and was gradually growing weaker. In a conversation with Mrs. Graham he expressed the wish to live until the Union

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was saved and that a just God would grant his prayer.

A Federal victory in July, 1861, in Missouri, had apparently saved that state for the Union, and General Scott with a powerful army was marching toward Richmond in order to strike the final blow that was to crush the Confederacy.

The Home Guards had received their weapons and caps from the state but no ammunition of any kind. The general expectation of a speedy ending of the war by the capture of the leaders of the Confederacy made officials very careless in providing the necessary accoutrements. President Lincoln's abhorrence of war and his confidence in the restoration of peace after a decisive Union victory, were also known and shared by the masses in the North; all of which caused considerable delay in the formation of such armies as a less humane president, who was better

informed of the vindictive spirit and powerful resources of the South, would have created with the utmost speed.

Who can describe the agony and despair of the patriots in the North when the crushing defeat of the Union army at Bull Run, in July, 1861, became known! Plunged from the highest expectations of victory into the deepest gloom of such a defeat paralyzed the North while in the South the victory was oil poured on the flames of secession. The immediate consequences of that defeat in the community of which the log house formed a part were decisive and in one instance tragical.

One evening as the young men were returning from a hard day's work of grading and were elated at the prospect of completing the contract with the railroad company on the next day and of securing work in the harvest fields, the postmaster entered and told them the

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unexpected news. The sudden explosion of a bomb could have had no greater effect than had the postmaster's simple statement. The magnitude of the struggle stood now clearly before them, and no one doubted but that the war would continue until the one side or the other would be annihilated.

From now on a strange uneasiness seized them. Each one had received assurances that with the disappearance of the war-cloud a desired position would be ready for him; and now the cloud had grown blacker and larger than ever. The sympathizers with the South, of whom even the little village had its quota, deprecated the idea of resistance, and privately advised to let the South go, giving as reasons that the struggle to keep them within the Union was hopeless; that the Southerners were born soldiers and the Northerners born farmers; that the North had no materials of war and

no leaders, and that the South had an abundance of both. It was the siren's song of treachery and cowardice and found many willing hearts and ears; it sang its bewitching air among the members of the club and made some converts, and threw among them the poison of distrust and the germ of disunion and secession.

Another report, however, came soon. It resembled the blast of Gabriel's trumpet on the day of resurrection: Congress had convened and granted to President Lincoln not only the limited amount of money and men for which he had asked, but it had also unanimously given him the power to use the entire strength, wealth and credit of the nation for the purpose of saving the Union. This message had a wonderful effect. It resembled a refreshing rain after the long drought that had withered patriotism; it was the star of Bethlehem that led to the cradle

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of liberty and raised vast armies among the peace-loving people of the North and took from death on the field of battle the agonizing fear of failure and placed in its stead the wreath of immortality.

The effect upon the members of the Log House Club was also decisive; Hugo Brenner, by virtue of his leadership of the Home Guards and his faculty of organizing, had been chosen in John's place chairman of the club; its members felt keenly that the time had come for its dissolution, and that the god of patriotism suffered no other god beside him. The few members who had lately lent their ear to the bewitching song "Let the South depart in peace" had returned to the patriotic fold upon the wave of enthusiasm which had its origin in the act of Congress turning its power over to the cabin boy, in the effort to save the Union.

Albert and Fred had taught the girls

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the last lesson, although nothing had been said about its being the last; but they knew that the many settlements among the members meant a severance of associates. The science of the teacher must yield to the science of the soldier, the human heart was not capable of serving two such masters. When Albert had explained the last problem to Mary and had closed the book and handed it to her with an expression as if his mind were upon the battle-field instead, she burst out crying and left the room. Mrs. Graham and Lucy were also visibly moved and thanked Albert for the many acts of kindness he had bestowed upon the family.

A meeting of the club was called for the next evening; all members well knew that it was to be the last one. The chairman, in an opening speech, praised the precision with which every act of the household had been done by all the mem-

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bers, and further touched upon the increased happiness and knowledge which had been the result. He then stated that the object of the meeting was to discuss the question whether the unity of the club should be preserved during the approaching war.

The opinions on that question differed considerably; several members advocated enlistment with the regular army, claiming that such an action would do away with the slow process of drilling for months before the active life of a soldier could begin, and that the members of the club, by virtue of having received private lessons by the chairman, were fully qualified to enter at once as members of the regular army. Other members feared that such an enlistment would bring about a complete dissolution of the club, as they would in all probability be scattered among different companies of experienced soldiers; while as members

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of the Home Guards they would form the nucleus of a new company, and on account of their former training would be of greater service to the cause than they could be by the immediate enlisting with the regular army. At the final balloting, Mrs. Graham and her daughters refusing to vote, the vote stood three in favor of enlisting and five against. The chairman in announcing the result remarked that in accordance with the principle of self-government the majority rules and that the club was to remain with the Home Guards. Fred Lambert objected to this ruling, insisting that in time of war the usual parliamentary rules and general principles do not govern; that the President of the United States had ordered, besides the enlistment of raw recruits, at least twenty-five thousand trained soldiers to increase and strengthen the regular army, and that, since the North had but few trained soldiers, it would

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be the duty of every one trained in military tactics to respond to the call at once and perhaps aid to quell in infancy, with the loss of a few men only, secession in some states, which if left alone for a considerable time, would require armies and thousands of lives and millions of dollars to suppress. Albert was of the same opinion. He pointed to Missouri and Kentucky, the two border states, which might be saved if the Unionists therein were, without delay, backed by an army of trained soldiers, sufficient to cope with the enemy, since the raw, untrained levies had proved their weakness at Bull Run and their unfitness to cope with the trained men of the South.

Paul Gerard, being convinced of the soundness of Albert's and Fred's arguments, made a motion to rescind the former vote and to leave the question of further united action undecided. This

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motion was carried without a dissenting vote.

Mrs. Graham was now asked to express her opinion. She obeyed, but had great difficulty to govern her voice while she spoke as follows:

“Being denied to be a mother of boys, I have adopted you, and my daughters have received you as brothers; you have fostered virtue and shunned vice; you have succeeded in establishing a union, composed of members from every dominant nation in the world, that has astonished every one who has heard of this club. We shall soon part, but be assured that wherever you may hereafter cast your lot, whether before the enemy or before the drillmaster, our prayers will be with you; and should you fall while striving to serve that larger Union, our tears will flow as they do now.”

The noble woman and her peerless daughters sobbingly left the room, while

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the men arose in homage to exalted womanhood.

At this moment the gravity of the situation weighed most heavily upon the shoulders of the young men.

They felt that with the breaking of the circle by which they had been united with the weeping women, the ideal civilization for which their club had striven, was shattered, and that they had in its place accepted the civilization of the dark ages of blood and murder. Fred Lambert broke the painful silence, during which a deep longing for their ideals, bordering on repentance, had seized them, by quoting Schiller in *Wilhelm Tell*,

“Es kann der Frömmste nicht im Frieden bleiben,
Wenn es dem bösen Nachbar nicht gefällt.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLUB'S EMBARKING FOR THE NEAREST FIELD OF CONTEST

EFFORTS had been made to withhold the news of the terrible defeat of the Union Army at Bull Run from Rev. Gilbert, whose physical condition was precarious during the hot summer of 1861. This sharp observer of human frailties, however, soon detected that the news of some important event was withheld from him and demanded of his granddaughter to tell him what had happened. The direct question and the imploring eyes of her grandfather, threw her into a spasm of weeping. Fortunately the attending physician called at that time. Upon the patient's repeating the question, the physician related, in the mildest form possible, the disastrous Union defeat, and that Presi-

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dent Lincoln had called for the immediate enlistment of five hundred thousand more troops to prosecute the war. The physician was surprised at the composure with which the patient had accepted the news; seizing his hand to congratulate him upon this feat of self-control, the physician noticed that the hand was lifeless and that the wide open eyes were rigid in death.

The club attended Rev. Gilbert's funeral in a body; they had been chosen as pall-bearers on their old friend's last journey and fired a salute over his grave in honor of the first victim of the Civil War who had died in the village.

Rev. Colby, a lifelong friend and former classmate of Rev. Gilbert, conducted the funeral rites, and at the open grave wafted a last farewell to him whom a kind fate had peacefully removed from the murderous scenes of his home to the pleasant dreamland and rest of the

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universal abode in which a just God rules supreme.

A recruiting officer in the city had heard of the company of young men and urged them to enlist at once in the regular army. This fact had been known by every member of the club and by the people of the village and had led to considerable discussion whether the state had the right to prevent any member of its home guards from enlisting in the regular army of the United States. Upon inquiry it was ascertained that the state had no such right in time of war. With this legal question settled, and in view of the urgent demand for trained soldiers and of the disorder prevailing in the management of the military affairs in the state, and upon the urgent invitation of friends in Missouri, the members finally agreed to join, in a body, General Lyon's command in that state, where strenuous efforts were made by the enemy to secure at

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least the southern half of the state for the Confederacy.

As soon as it became known that all the members of the club were to join the federal forces, a universal sadness spread over the village, and every family felt for the first time, as they noticed the anxiety and care with which these young men prepared for the field, that war had actually begun.

The day of parting had come; a large steamer was to carry the members to St. Louis. The whole village was aroused and accompanied the club to the landing. Mrs. Graham and her daughters had, for the last time, waited upon the boys at the table; any attempt to drive away sadness was a failure. The landlord, who had come with his conveyance to take the women to the landing, had brought the news that large bodies of Confederates had entered Missouri and that General Lyon had repeatedly demanded help from

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the East but had failed to get it, and that the West had to help itself. This news destroyed every doubt as to the wisdom of the club's action and made every member thereof feel relieved.

Albert was the last to bid good-bye to Mrs. Graham and her daughters. He had resolved to send his school books with his farewell to his sister in Buffalo, and to ask Mrs. Graham to do it for him; in his patriotic zeal he had forgotten everything else, even his sister. As he handed to Mrs. Graham the books with a letter addressed to his sister, and once more thanked her for all the friendship and loving care he had received from her and asked her forgiveness for all the grief he might have caused her, she, with a mother's affection, kissed him farewell and with an unsteady voice added:

“No, Albert, our accounts are balanced to date; whatsoever the future may have in store for us, I shall leave the settlement

with the great God who has permitted this tearing asunder."

"Good-bye and farewell, Lucy, my sister," said Albert to the weeping girl. As an answer she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him and then with her mother left the room. As Albert turned with outstretched hands toward Mary, who was seated on a chair near the window where she could see the people passing to the landing, she turned pale, a convulsive trembling came over her and she sank noiselessly to the floor. Albert, terror stricken, laid her on the couch; her eyes were closed and her teeth firmly set; no breath escaped her lips, which he passionately kissed. Never had he beheld a fairer face than the one before him upon which death had apparently impressed its mark. Her young life passed before him; he thought of her searching eyes, the sudden withdrawal of her hand when, by chance, she had

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touched his; the peculiar secret care that she had shown for his welfare—all these thoughts turned upon him in a moment and revealed to him the loss of that love which the world could never restore.

Her mother came upon his call for help; she noticed instantly that Mary had only fainted. Loud calls for Albert were heard outside, while Mrs. Graham was administering restoratives to Mary and soon brought her back to consciousness. As Mary opened her eyes Albert fell upon his knees before her, kissing her eyes and lips, and with a voice softened by the overpowering passion of love that had thrilled his very being, cried, "Farewell, my love, my sweet love!" and then left the room to join Fred, who was still calling. Upon seeing Albert, Fred met him with the prosaic question, "Where in the deuce have you been? we shall be too late for the boat!" to which Albert half angrily replied, "Where in the name

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of heaven did you get that word 'deuce' from?"

Almost the entire population of the village was present at the landing when Albert and Fred arrived; Lucy and Carlo were also there, while Mrs. Graham stayed with Mary. The dog had whined so pitifully when he noticed the boys, his former comrades, leaving the house with their luggage, that Lucy was determined to let Carlo see the big ship in which his kind friends were to leave. The boat arrived at the same time that Fred and Albert reached the landing. The parting was painful, and its tragical character was enhanced by the following unexpected incident:

Harry Elwell, one of the village boys, who had joined the Home Guards, had secretly determined to go with the members of the club. He was one of the best qualified members of the company, the best shot and a Unionist to the backbone;

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his father had died many years before and the son had been the sole support of his crippled mother. The old lady had insisted upon seeing the "boys off" and was at the landing. As Fred and Albert shook hands with her and turned toward the boat, Harry stepped up to his mother, fell on her neck and told her that he too was going with the boys. The mother made no reply but clung to her son and wept. The ship's bell rang, the huge sidewheels of the boat began to stir, and still the old lady held her boy in close embrace. The passengers, who had witnessed the scene between mother and son, begged the captain to countermand the order of starting; he unwillingly did so, then turning to the weeping mother and freeing the boy by carefully unloosening her arms, he asked her in a clear, impressive voice:

"Do you, in the presence of the Almighty God and these witnesses, refuse

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to allow your son to go with his friends and comrades to defend his country and yours?"

A dead silence followed. The mother covered her eyes with her hands through which the tears were forcing themselves. The sun, that had been under a cloud, suddenly burst forth and illumined the old lady's gray hair until it shone like a glittering diadem. Harry had again gently embraced his mother and whispered some endearing words to her; she slowly freed herself, kissed him once more, and although her tears were flowing fast, bade him farewell.

Upon sign from the captain the wheels again began to revolve, and as the mother turned toward her home the band of the receding ship began to play the national hymn and the audience on ship and shore joined in the sacred anthem.

The waves of the grand old hymn also reached Mary's chamber in the now

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deserted house. She heard the trumpet's sound and lay trembling in her mother's arms as if its notes were echoes of the thuds of falling earth upon her lover's coffin.

The members of the Log House Club waved a last farewell to their friends on shore. Carlo, seeming to grasp the situation, ran to Lucy and barked loudly. The distracted girl, well understanding the troubled animal's appeal, threw herself on the ground, and clasping her arms around her faithful friend cried:

“No, Carlo, they will never come back again.”

The huge steamer plowed onward to its destination, St. Louis. The topic of conversation among its passengers was war, and war only. The grasping trader commingled with the patriotic warrior; the goal of the one was the amassing of untold wealth and the goal of the other was victory or the grave;

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the lips of the one were burning with the "hot sling" sold by the bartender, and the lips of the other were still burning with the kisses of his despairing loved ones.—Horrible war! The barbarian's pride and the family's curse! Will civilization ever grow strong enough to throttle that demon?

CHAPTER XVII

SCENES OF HOME

“**H**OW dreary everything is around here, Mamma, without the boys,” exclaimed Lucy on the next morning. The old log house seemed to be as large and as old again as formerly; the long table in the dining-room, without the lively conversation and hearty laughter of the boys, stared at the women like the monument erected over departed friends. Even Mrs. Graham, the matter-of-fact woman, while the breakfast was on the table and she was awaiting her daughters, was overpowered with the loneliness of the place and with a longing for her adopted sons, and burying her face in her arms, she leaned forward on the table and wept. Thus Mary and Lucy found her.

What a consolation to know that others

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are sharing the same burden that seems to smother your very life, and to take away the sunshine which had made it a continuous holiday!

Carlo even, walked about the place with drooping head and ears, the very picture of misery. He missed the boys' cheering voices and their plays with him. They had trained him to fill the wood-box, to get Albert's hat and shoes, to stand on his hind legs and shoulder a toy gun, and to do many other tricks, all of which he delighted to do. He knew by the women's tears that a great calamity had befallen the old log house; his faithful heart shared his friends' sorrow and he tried by redoubled efforts to console them.

In the following spring, during an almost unprecedented high water, Carlo saved the lives of two small children from drowning. At that time the brook encircling the village had suddenly be-

come a stream and had carried with it the little brother and sister while they were playing on its bank. At Carlo's death a few years later, the whole village mourned and he was buried on the brightest spot in the village cemetery. Afterwards the villagers; with the financial aid of the members of the Log House Club, erected over his grave a beautiful monument, which represented the faithful dog with the children he had saved, clinging to him.

Farewell, Carlo! Never has man deserved a monument more than you! Unselfish, never driven by ambition nor desire for reward, faithful in the grandest signification of that word, always ready to do and die for humanity, the story of your noble life is an example for sin-laden mankind, and is worthy of the tears that were shed when you crossed the dark river. Farewell!

The whole village felt the void among

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them after the young men had left. No one had fully appreciated the silent influence that had been exerted by that union of young men with high ideals. They had at first been made the butt of ridicule by worshippers of strong drink and tobacco. The log house had been dubbed "The Insane Asylum," by the lower strata of society, and by the better classes, "The Phantom Castle."

Their faith in the realization of ideals, the execution of which would require the uprooting of doubly entrenched habits, had not yet been planted among the newcomers. Riley's confession of guilt, the unceasing activity and truthfulness and the dropping of whiskey and tobacco from the list of necessities among the members of the club, their wholesale enlistment and their joining the Union army, were required to convince the most obstinate and vicious among the scoffers, of the pure intentions and actions of the mem-

bers and of the efficiency of their principles.

On the Sunday following the departure of the boys, two voices were missing in the church choir, the owners of which had endeared themselves to everyone. The organist had played the prelude, the choir had arisen to sing the opening hymn, but no tone escaped them, only tears filled their eyes in the recollection of the cruel parting from their companions. In their stead, the whole congregation arose, and, inspired with the sanctity of the moment, sang as they had never sung before. That Sunday's service was consecrated to the memory of the boys in blue and to the bereft mother in yonder corner of the church, yearning for the presence of her only child.

The young minister, who had been sent there on that Sabbath to preach his first sermon, bestowed such a eulogy upon the departed friends that even the

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old mother ceased yearning for her boy during the young patriot's glow of eloquence. He pictured death upon the battle-field in defense of one's country as the grandest and most beautiful death of all.

He, too, was true to his ideals. By his undaunted energy and eloquent appeals to the young men of the county, he revived enthusiasm for the cause, saved the rest of the Home Guards from disbanding, raised the company to the full quota of men, and adopted Albert's motto, "Never surrender." Later, as the captain of the company, he paid the debt to his country by a hero's death upon a southern battle-field, while his betrothed, Rev. Gilbert's grandchild, Agnes, longed to follow him when he was laid away.

The village people were anxiously following the movements of the contending armies in Missouri. Several letters had

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been received from the boys who reported their arrival at St. Louis and described the war-like aspect of that city. The telegraph worked as yet very defectively in the West. The report of the battle of Wilson's Creek, fought on August 10, 1861, reached the village several days after the battle had occurred. No list of the dead and wounded had accompanied the telegram, only the death of General Lyon was reported; also that the losses on both sides had been heavy and that the Union army had returned in good order to Springfield.

The tormenting pain of uncertainty as to the names of the dead and wounded, was most keenly felt in the Graham family. Finally, on the morning of the fourth day after the battle, Mary received a letter from Albert bearing the postmark of Springfield, Missouri. She stared at the letter as if it had been a messenger from heaven, then covered

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her eyes as if she had been dazzled by a sudden light and pressed her heart as if to keep it from breaking.

Why is the brilliant messenger of joy so closely allied to the dark one of grief? Do we, in the act of being lifted to the highest mountain peak of happiness, see clearer the bottomless gulf of despair below, had the die been cast the other way?

Upon a sign from Mary, her mother opened the letter and handed it back to her daughter. While reading, Mary's face showed distinctly the agitation of her heart. Mother and sister waited anxiously as the color of her cheeks changed from the flush of the rose to the paleness of the lily. Having read the letter she handed it to her mother with a sigh, and left the room without a word. Both Mrs. Graham and Lucy read and re-read the letter which follows, and which may aid the reader in

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understanding more fully the closing scenes of this narrative by becoming acquainted with the motives that led the actors:

SPRINGFIELD, Mo., August 9, 1861.

DEAREST: Hoping that you have received my letter of August 5th, I shall relate to you our further experience. We are now at Springfield, Mo., where we arrived yesterday; the town is full of Union fugitives from the southern counties of the state that have been invaded by the Confederates under the Generals McCulloch and Price. Fred is a jewel; his good humor has made us many friends in our company. Our experience during the time we were members of the Log House Club has now become invaluable. The assortment of needles and thread with which you presented me last Christmas is now more appreciated than ever. I would not exchange it for the most precious ring. That reminds me that no ring of mine adorns your busy hand! How is it possible that but a single thought of you can fill my whole being! When at parting I held, as it seemed, your lifeless form, I knew not whether it was love or approaching death that blotted from my memory every other thought but of you. I know it now! It was love—as endless as the ring that you shall wear for me; as pure as you are and as immortal as is creation itself. Severed we are still united. Should I fall, plant some forget-me-nots upon my grave, but do not mourn for me!

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Fred is again calling as he did on the day we left the old home; the army is to march at night and attack the enemy in the morning. Fred has just finished a letter to his mother in Germany and we have agreed that should one fall the other would send notice to his friends. I hear the last signal. Farewell, my sweet love, and think of him who always thinks of you.

Your ALBERT.

Day after day passed in tormenting uncertainty as to the life or death of Albert and Fred. Newspapers furnished very inaccurate lists of the dead, wounded and missing. Two weeks had passed since Mary had received Albert's letter and notwithstanding the many inquiries made by letter and friends at headquarters, no trace had been found of them since the battle, and no notice had been sent by either. Were they both dead, mortally wounded, or made prisoners? Had heaven no compassion on that poor girl who with tearless eyes so patiently longed for a message from the dead or living lover?

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In the meantime the building of the new schoolhouse had progressed rapidly. School was to commence on the second Monday of September and Mary Graham had been formally elected as one of the teachers, but had not yet accepted. She could not teach any one as long as she was in doubt about the life or death of Albert.

At last she resolved to search for the missing one in person and chose for that purpose the garb of a nurse. She had been a highly successful assistant to the village doctor in nursing difficult cases that had come under his care, and in view of that fact Mrs. Graham and Lucy at last approved of her desperate step and did everything in their power to aid her.

Reports from Missouri indicated a firm determination on the part of the Federals to drive the Confederates from the state. In the certainty of future

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bloodshed nurses were in great demand in that locality and were gratefully received.

On the day before Mary was to leave for the South, Mrs. Graham received a letter from an attorney in Germany in which he requested Fred's present address, and notifying her further of the death of Fred's mother and the necessity of his presence in Germany as one of the two heirs of her large estate. Mrs. Graham duly entrusted this letter with Mary who, on the next day, as the sun was sinking in the west, left her old home.

Mary took passage on the same steamer that a month before had taken the boys to St. Louis. She was made aware of that fact when the captain asked after Mrs. Elwell's condition. Mary informed him that the old lady was well provided for by the community and that the attention and care that she had received

from the village people had proved to be a great consolation to her. Upon the captain's further inquiry after the young men who had left for Missouri for the purpose of joining General Lyon's army, she related the painful absence of news after the battle of Wilson's Creek; that they were unable to learn whether any of the young men had been killed or wounded and that she was now going south to seek for them, and that she might perhaps be of some help in taking care of the wounded.

The captain gave her some valuable advice and promised to aid her further by giving her recommendations to several Union commanders then operating in South Missouri.

The captain did more than this. Arrived at St. Louis he personally conducted Mary to a private family where she remained a few days until she was well acquainted with the difficulties of her

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task. She was soon convinced that she would have to follow the tracks of several Confederate regiments which had been most actively engaged in the late battle and in the caring of the dead and wounded on both sides, and that in order to have any show of success she had to dress as a boy. Mary's courage grew with the difficulties she encountered and her determination to find Albert and Fred, either dead or alive, became unalterable.

The family with whom she stayed provided her with a boy's suit and with coloring matter to change her complexion. Her beautiful hair was cut in order to make her disguise complete. Before all this was done and before she left St. Louis she delivered the letter from Fred's attorney in Germany to a reliable bank with directions to attend to the matter, and also made arrangements with the same bank to have money sent

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to her, even though it be to adjoining states that had seceded.

Mary appeared before the hospitable family in her new attire, carrying an old valise; at first they failed to recognize her, so perfect was her disguise. They wished her success upon her sad errand; and Mary, thanking them for their kindness, departed for the South.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING

AT Springfield, Missouri, Mary was bewildered by hearing so many different stories of fugitives and wounded soldiers who had been harbored by families residing near the late battle-field. In order to have any show of success she was obliged to trace every report and to ascertain the details in every instance. On the evening of the fifth day she had still no clue of the missing ones. Being hungry and tired—the country around her was drained of all eatables and appeared like a large cemetery—she longed to lie down and sleep the last sleep from which there is no awakening. She had visited every family that had taken care of wounded soldiers, but no description of the men applied to Albert or Fred. The very

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pity with which she was met everywhere convinced her of the impossibility of the task.

She was now several miles from the battle-field and too tired to continue the search. Finding a secluded spot behind a clump of bushes she lay down and fell asleep. The yelling of a boy who was crashing through the bushes where she was lying awoke her suddenly. While driving a cow the boy had noticed a dark object before him and being uncertain whether it was a beast or a man he had given the alarm which brought Mary quickly to her feet. She at once remembered her strange situation and asked the boy, who was not more than twelve years old, whether there was a place in the neighborhood in which she could spend the night. The boy told her to come along to his mother who could tell better than he could. On the way he told Mary that his mother had

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for several weeks taken care of a wounded Yankee soldier and that about a week ago he had been taken to Louisiana by a lady and two "niggers"; and that the lady had given his mother a sum of money with which they had bought the cow he was driving. This information gave her new hope and courage. Trembling with excitement she asked herself whether it could be possible that she had at last found the right clue.

When she reached the boy's home, Mary was well received by the mother who gladly offered a night's lodging to the exhausted boy, as she supposed Mary to be. While her son was doing the chores she corroborated in full his story and described the wounded soldier, the strange lady and her help. The woman's description of the soldier, who had still been in a helpless condition and unable to stir when he was taken South, applied more to Fred than to Albert.

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In the fullness of her heart Mary sank on her knees and thanked an All-wise Power for the first ray of light in the gloom of her despair. The woman was unable to give the lady's name nor that of the sick soldier, but she described accurately the peculiar carriage in which the lady and her attendants had traveled and in which they had taken the invalid with them. With this indefinite information Mary continued her search the next day.

Words are inadequate to convey a true idea of the suffering, deprivations and disappointments of this brave girl during the next four days. At noon on the fifth day she stopped for rest at a little hamlet built at a cross-road comprising a few houses and sheds. She had traced the carriage with its occupants to this cross-road. She entered the largest of the cabin-like buildings after she had vainly knocked for admittance

and beheld a sight that would strike terror to the most courageous. In the rear of the large room which she had entered, there lay upon a cot an apparently dead man. His head was turned towards the door and his wide-open eyes were staring at her. As she turned to leave the room the light from the open door revealed fully the ghastly face. It was Fred! Mary recognized him by a scar on his forehead. She went nearer to him. The suddenness of recognition and the solemnity of death made her falter. Her eyes grew dim, her brain was in a whirl, and her whole body seemed to sink into a bottomless space. She was about to yield to the weakness of mind and body that like an electric shock pierces the center of life and tests the strength of its sinews, but the elevating hope of final success and the thought of Albert came to her rescue and changed the fainting girl to the

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heroine who defies weakness, and who in all ages forms the vanguard of humanity.

Two women, who resided in the building, had, in the meantime, returned and entered the room. They had seen Mary's fainting spell and rushed to her aid, but were amazed at her sudden change from utter helplessness to a most vigorous demonstration of strength. They had never seen nor heard of instances in which even death had been held at bay by the power of the will. Being superstitious they believed the dark and handsome boy before them to be a messenger from the evil one, which caused them quickly to release their hands and to turn to the open door.

Mary was surprised at their strange actions, but was convinced that they were the owners of the premises and told them who she was and that she had come to nurse the sick man if they would permit her to stay. She begged the

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loan of some woman's clothing until she could obtain her trunk from St. Louis. The women gladly consented and informed her that their husbands were Confederate soldiers who had joined the army on their wedding day; that the Yankees were whipped and the war was ended and that they expected their husbands to return in a few days. Mary further learned that the persons who had left Fred with these women believed that he had died the night before they had reached the hamlet and that the young lady, when she learned of Fred's death, had been thrown into spasms and that her attendants had feared for her life. They had arranged to leave the corpse with the women for burial and to hasten South with the young lady to her home.

The women told Mary that they had purchased a coffin with part of the money left by the lady and while placing the corpse within it the eyes of the dead

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man opened and the entire body slowly relaxed. The physician who was then called said that Fred had a chance to recover provided he could be made to take some nourishment, and further explained that his death-like condition had been caused chiefly by blood poisoning from a wound that had not yet healed. Mary informed her hostesses that Fred was a German and an heir to a large estate in Germany and that they would be well paid for everything they did. These mutual explanations inspired confidence between them. One of the women's dresses proved to be a perfect fit for Mary, who discarded her boy's apparel without the least regret, although it had well served its purpose.

In her new attire she stood before the pale sleeper. The memory of bygone days passed enchantingly before her: The strong friendship between Albert and Fred, her deep love for Albert and

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the cruel pain of parting from him. Placing her warm hand upon Fred's icy cold forehead and kneeling beside his couch, she asked in a voice trembling with love and woe:

“Oh, Fred, where is Albert?”

No answer came. She noticed only a slight moving of his eyelids and a slight tremor of his body. Bending down so he might hear, she exclaimed:

“Fred, you must recover, you must tell me where Albert is! The battle begins, for Albert's sake help me to win it!”

Her eyes shone with the fire of this resolution; her form grew erect again as of old and from the drooping mourner she had changed in an instant to the brave woman who is determined to win the prize at all hazards. As she stood before Fred holding his hands and counting the feeble beating of his pulse, the two women entered and saw the beauti-

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ful girl meditating beside the couch of the apparently doomed soldier. Looking up, Mary saw the astonishment of her new friends and smiled, while the latter gazed on the noble, girlish face of grace and energy, and attracted by the wonderful power displayed in her features, threw their arms around her and kissed her as a token of welcome.

Thereafter began a siege with death. It required the utmost exertion of the three women. Mary remained with the patient day and night. A ball that had been lodged dangerously near Fred's heart was extracted by a skilled surgeon who assigned the presence of the ball as the reason for Fred's continued unconsciousness. After the operation Fred's condition improved physically, but his mind remained a blank for a long time; nor was he able to regain the power of speech, although he made many efforts to articulate which were

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murmurs only, and not understood by any one.

The clamor of war was around them. Confederates as well as Federals passed the hamlet at intervals without molesting the women. An officer, whose hand had been bandaged by the women, had fastened a metal cross to the door. Many sick and wounded soldiers were cared for by them; it made no difference to which army an invalid belonged; in fact, the women frequently did not know whether the suffering soldier was a Federal or Confederate, consequently the commanders of both sides often supplied the "Cross Road Hospital" with the necessary provisions and medicines, as they were informed of the living heaven between the two surging fires of purgatory by some convalescent soldier who would, upon his return to duty in the field, praise its nurses as angels and their work as sacred.

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Winter came and Fred's mind was still under a cloud; his mutterings were still unintelligible, although his body had become stronger. On a bright day in February, while left alone in the room, he slowly arose, and, for the first time since he had been wounded, stood upon his feet. As Mary entered the room he stretched out his hand and distinctly uttered "Mary." She went to him, with tears of joy running down her cheeks, and grasping his hand, asked:

"Where is Albert?"

He did not answer immediately, a cloud of unspeakable woe passed over his face as he pointed to the floor and with a tone as solemn as the grave, answered,

"Dead!"

"Dead," repeated Mary, and she sank upon Fred's couch in utter hopelessness.

Fred's condition became worse after his premature exertion; the physician

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who was called shook his head in severe disapproval of Fred's arbitrary action and said that a repetition might prove fatal, since the patient had again fallen into that stupor which so closely resembled death. Mary had no time to mourn, her whole attention and that of the two women and two negroes, a brother and sister, who had been engaged as assistants, were steadily in demand by the sick and wounded that were sent from the neighboring localities in which both opposing armies operated. Mary's power of resistance seemed marvelous. She often dropped to sleep from sheer exhaustion while at work. The patients deeply appreciated the struggle of this noble girl in their behalf, and many a youth, who owed his life to her tender care and skillful treatment, in leaving the place, left his love with that angel in human form.

Spring had come and gone and Fred

was still in danger of a relapse. He, more than any other whose life had been saved by these unselfish women, had noted their exertions and the remarkable will power of Mary. When his mind had darkened and death asked for admission, it was Mary's gentle voice asking, "Fred, where are you?" that brought him back to consciousness and life. He would watch for hours her deeds of kindness to the afflicted and gradually he felt a passionate love for the sweet girl, which made health and life the more desirable.

Albert's name had not been mentioned since his almost fatal effort of trying his strength. Mary had at first accepted Fred's disclosure of Albert's death as an unalterable fact, but as she pondered over Fred's condition as it must have been since the battle, hope, the undying flame of life in the human heart, whispered louder and louder that

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Fred, in his protracted delirium, might have been mistaken and that Albert might still live; that he might have been severely wounded and, like Fred, might have been saved by some sister of mercy.

Eternal hope! Who would live without thee! How many hearts crushed with affliction hast thou saved! How many hands, directed by despair, hast thou stayed on their way to destruction!

The spring and summer of 1862 had brought a rich harvest of blood; the battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas had been fought and won by the Federals. The immediate result of the victory had been the saving of Missouri for the Union. The battles around Richmond in Virginia had been less successful for the Federals and consequently the danger of the capture of Washington was imminent. A feeling of distrust prevailed

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in the North similar to that which had existed after the first battle of Bull Run. The clamor, "Let the South depart in peace," again became the cry in the North by politicians of every class, whereas the patriots that had not yet enlisted and were able to fight, joined the army; thus proving their love of country by deeds and leaving to stump speakers and to stump politicians the task of taking care of the wind.

As soon as Fred was able to write, Mary informed the St. Louis bank of his convalescence. In a few days two gentlemen, of whom one was a notary public, appeared at the hospital and introduced themselves to Mary and Fred as the representatives of the bank in St. Louis, producing at the same time the necessary vouchers. They had come for the purpose of obtaining from Fred a power of attorney for some person in

Germany who was to serve as Fred's agent and manager of the large estate which had been left him by his mother. After the business had been completed, Fred asked them for a private interview at which he made his last will and testament in favor of Mary Graham.

The successful completion of his personal affairs had a remarkable effect upon Fred. He had been tormented about the disposition of his property in the event of sudden death and had for some time resolved to turn over to Mary his entire expected wealth in Germany as a token of his love, but he had been unable to devise a safe plan of executing his desire until the arrival of the representatives of a responsible bank.

His mind, now freed from this care, had won a victory over his body; the thought that Mary's future could under no circumstances be threatened with the care for her daily bread as had been

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her mother's lot, seemed to drive the blood more rapidly through his veins; his appetite returned and his eyes reflected the inner glow of this very change. The physician and the nurses noted with astonishment this rapid transition from threatening death to vigorous life, which the expert called a freak of nature and the nurses called a miracle.

How merciful and yet how just is Nature in her disposition of pain and joy! During the terrific suffering caused by his wounds, man is longing for death as a deliverer. In his gradual recovery of health he sees the beauties of heaven and earth, he feels the unspeakable joy of returning health and with the love which is akin to that love of Him who died on the cross, and who in the pangs of death asked that even His murderers should be forgiven, man, in the disposition of an All-wise Power, is also ready and willing to forgive every foe.

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Fred gained in health and strength. In less than a month from the time he had made his will, he was able to help himself. During that time he had occasional conversations with Mary about their old home, but both refrained from mentioning Albert's name, although each felt that the question of his life or death must soon be determined beyond any doubt.

Mary could not possibly avoid seeing the pure and tender love that Fred expressed in every action and in every look. She saw that rising passion with a trembling fear and avoided as much as possible his approaches. The calamity of Fred's growing love almost broke her down. She was convinced that no living man could take Albert's place in her affections, even if she had the most positive proof of his death. In this almost unbearable condition of her mind she finally resolved to demand of Fred

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what positive knowledge he had of Albert's death, and, if there could be no doubt, to show her where he was buried. On the next morning she invited Fred to a private conversation in the arbor that had been built by the convalescents of the Cross Road Hospital.

Fred obeyed sadly. In compliance he related the events which had taken place since Albert and he had enlisted at St. Louis and which are stated in the next chapter. Mary listened throughout with an interest which seemed to drive every drop of blood from her countenance and to rend the walls of her agitated heart.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK.

IT now becomes necessary to trace some of the events which took place after the members of the club had left their home.

Shortly before reaching St. Louis, upon the invitation of the captain, they held a farewell meeting in the latter's private office. At this meeting they resolved and sacredly pledged themselves to hold a reunion on July 4, 1865, in the old log house.

When they landed at St. Louis the condition in Missouri was extremely critical.

To save southern Missouri, General Lyon had been ordered to take command of all the Union forces in that state. Encouraged by the Confederates' success

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at Bull Run, Generals McCulloch, Price and Pierce, with about sixteen thousand troops that had been gathered in the states of Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, were detailed by the Confederate government to co-operate with Governor Jackson of Missouri in order to retain the southern half of that state for the Confederacy. To oppose these forces General Lyon had, all told, not quite eight thousand men, mostly home guards, a few battalions of regular infantry and even from this small force, General Scott, then the commander-in-chief of all the Union forces, had ordered the cavalry to be sent East.

Our friends were immediately sent toward Springfield, where General Lyon's army was operating. Albert and Fred reported to Captain Plummer of the regular infantry, while the other members of the club were assigned to other divisions.

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On August 9, 1861, the Union troops in and around Springfield were ordered to be in readiness to march at any time against the enemy who had approached the city within ten miles. At twilight in the evening of that day the small army of eight thousand men courageously left Springfield to meet the Confederate army of sixteen thousand, in order to at least check their march to the North, if they could not defeat them, owing to the inequality of numbers.

"There will be no Bull Run this time," said Albert as he handed Fred the musket which had been carefully examined by the two friends, and then both hastened to join their company.

It is not the intention to describe the entire battle which commenced shortly after daybreak on the next morning, and which terminated in the evening by an orderly withdrawal of the Union forces to Springfield; nor to describe the death

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of General Lyon at the head of his troops while he cheered them on to overcome the unequal numerical contest by unequaled bravery.

Of the many tragedies during the war only one is singled out that is no more nor less tragic than many others, but that has thrown its shadow over the chasm of half a century and is still remembered and felt by the few whom death has spared, and who will bear willing testimony of the heroism of its actors.

Plummer's battalion, to which Albert and Fred belonged, was about the first division that came into action. With an irresistible determination they threw the opposing Confederate forces into disorder and partial flight. Having crossed a corn-field and being hidden by a dense thicket they were in the act of capturing the nearest Confederate battery when the enemy received reinforcements of two regiments from Louis-

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iana and Arkansas and they, in turn, drove back the Unionists.

In the heat of the battle and by force of circumstances Plummer's battalion had divided into many squads while attacking and pursuing the enemy. The sudden appearance and forward movement of the new Confederate troops was hotly contested by Albert and Fred and five more of their company. They were somewhat sheltered by the under-brush and opposed the enemy with fearful effect, checking their advance.

Neither Albert nor Fred nor any of their five comrades had noticed the gradual withdrawal of the Union forces and the gradual massing of Confederates in front of them until it was too late. The small Federal force was soon completely cut off and could have honorably surrendered if that word had ever been thought of among them.

They dispersed quickly, since they were

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now the targets of the approaching enemy. Fred and Albert, being still close together, had almost miraculously escaped the multitude of bullets aimed at them. At last Fred fell, hit by three bullets; a few moments later a hail of lead struck Albert and he sank noiselessly down to that eternal sleep. At the same moment a Confederate officer broke through the heavy thicket and knelt beside the dying foe; casting one look at the face on which death was now rapidly pressing its mark, the officer, in a tone that would unman the bravest of the brave, a tone in which trembled all the tortures of hell and the love of heaven, cried, "Albert!" and from the dying boy's lips, from the immeasurable depth of his heart, came the word "John," and then those lips closed forever.

John, for it was he, buried his face upon his dead friend's breast and wept;

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even the fierce men from the South under his command stood awe-stricken before the bloody harvest.

War, however, is relentless! The Confederates, who had driven the Federals before them, were forced to stop in the pursuit and retreat over the gained ground before a perfect deluge of shot and shell from DuBois' battery. Pressing a kiss upon Albert's brow John quickly arose and made a forward movement towards the hill from whence the death-bringing missiles came. This rapid change must have been immediately noticed by the vigilant Federal commander, since the next shot from there struck John, killing him and two of his men instantly and wounding many others. Upon the Confederates' retreat before such a rain of death a gigantic son of Louisiana picked up John's body and placed it beside Albert's.

Eventually the Confederates were

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driven back within their lines. During the continuance of the battle neither army permitted the other to occupy the first battle-field that had been enriched by the blood of as valiant soldiers on both sides as ever waged a contest. There the two friends lay undisturbed in the sacred stillness of death, guarded from all sides by the cannons of the North and South.

On the next day, the Confederates being then in possession of the late battle-field, the burial of the dead began. The detachment that had been under the immediate command of John during the battle and that had witnessed the tragic death of the two friends, insisted that one coffin and one grave should hold both and that their remains should be embalmed to make their future removal possible.

Midway between where the two friends had fallen their grave was dug; as the

coffin was lowered and the blue and the gray were forever united in Mother Earth, it was not the glare of the sun alone which made the sons of Louisiana shade their eyes. No guns were fired over the grave, a prayer only was uttered by some one for a Union of the North and South as true as had been the friendship of the two foes below and as lasting as their union would be in death.

As we know, Fred's wounds did not prove fatal; the loss of blood together with the prevailing heat caused him to faint and appear like a corpse. Even after he had recovered consciousness he could not stir. His condition resembled a living death, although he distinguished the sounds about him and had recognized John's presence. When the Confederates were in turn driven back, a shell exploded near him hitting a Confederate as he was in the act of

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stepping over Fred's apparently dead body. The result was grawsome; the victim, with one-half of his head blown off and the brain oozing from the other half, dropped instantly dead upon Fred and lay there until the next morning, when the Confederates in burying the dead, found to their surprise a "Yankee" still showing signs of life, pinned under their comrade's dead body.

Fred owed the further special care that was taken of him by the enemy to the fact that he had fallen near Albert and that it was presumed that he, too, must have been a friend of John's. Fred was accordingly left with a poor family living near the battle-field, with instructions from the physician as to the further care of the wounded man. Two bullets, which had been extracted from his body, were also turned over to the family with directions to hand them to the patient if he should recover or to

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put them into his coffin if he should die.

The news of the battle of Wilson's Creek reached Elma several weeks before she received the report of John's death. She had never ceased to love that tall, chivalrous man whose outward appearance impressed the beholders at once with the honesty of the man and the kindness of his nature. Elma had long ago repented of her vain and selfish treatment of him at the time when he had offered her the most visible proof of his honest love, and she, in a fit of self-admiration, had rudely rejected the form in which the proof had been given.

When she heard of his death on the field of battle, life's greatest and sweetest boon seemed to have vanished from her forever. She at once set out to recover his remains and bring them home for burial, but failed to find them; the soldiers of his command who had been

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present at his burial, in the belief that the war had ended, had left the service. The only other living witness, as far as she could ascertain, was Fred, who was, as yet, unable to give her any information. She thereupon took Fred with her in order to give him better care than he could receive from the poor family who had been entrusted with him, as has been related in a former chapter.

CHAPTER XX

FOUND AT LAST

RETURNING now to Fred and Mary in the arbor at the "Cross Road Hospital," where Fred had ended the description of the battle and its bloody results and was explaining his semi-conscious condition after he had been wounded. Mary was still not fully convinced of Albert's death and attributed Fred's impression of the scenes that followed after the battle to the hallucinations of a disordered mind. She was determined to obtain absolute proof of Albert's death; for that purpose she ascertained Elma's address and sent a messenger to her with the information that Fred, whom Elma had left as dead, had nearly recovered and had agreed to search for Albert and John's grave, further asking her to join them in the

search which would be instituted upon her arrival and for which preparations had been made.

The messenger returned in company with Elma and two of her servants. She was handsome; the subdued mourning for John was still traceable in her classic features. As the two girls were standing face to face, both being the innocent victims of the cruel war, and both harboring an undying love for the two friends in an unknown grave, the tragedy of the moment overpowered them. Although they were strangers their tears commingled as they embraced each other, yielding to the sympathetic longing of true women to cling to another heart that throbs in like anguish.

Preparations were hastily made to leave within a few days. When the time arrived for parting, Mary's two faithful co-workers, whose husbands had been killed in battle, were frantic with

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grief at Mary's leaving. The promise that she would soon return did not lessen their grief; Fred's bountiful payment for their services had no effect upon them; they cried and moaned for that angel who had miraculously appeared at their threshold and who was now returning to that place where hatred and murder were unknown.

After a few days' journey they came in sight of the battle-field of Wilson's Creek. Fred left Mary and Elma at the home of the old lady who had been his first attendant. They were received with undisguised joy by mother and son who could not believe that the homeless boy of 1861 and Mary, the distinguished looking lady of 1862, were one and the same, until Mary reminded them of the circumstances of their first meeting.

Fred and the servants went to work immediately, searching for the location

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of the thicket and corn-field where Albert and John had fallen. Now that Fred was called upon to produce the proof of their deaths, he began to doubt the facts, as he had pictured them in his memory. After a long and vain search among the fields and woods, which now looked so remarkably strange to him, he became convinced that without help from some one who was better acquainted with the landscape and the burial of the dead after the battle, he would never find the exact spot where the two friends had been buried. Or was it true, as Mary indicated, that the death and burial of his friends was a dream only, and that Mary with her doubts and her indestructible faith in God's love and justice, was right and he wrong? The torment of approaching insanity was upon him and utterly exhausted he fell asleep.

After many hours he awoke. Elma's

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servants and the widow's son were near by and were glad of his awakening. The long sleep had refreshed him and driven away the threatening clouds of a disordered mind. With renewed vigor he resumed the search; questioning the boy about the location of the last year's corn-field he was astonished at his ready answer, and became more astonished when the boy told him that he had helped to bury the dead on the next day after the battle. Being further questioned he remembered distinctly that the soldiers had wept as they buried an officer and a "Yankee" in the same grave. Upon Fred's request the boy led them at once to the spot, nearly eighty rods away, and pointed to the grave after having cleared away a lot of dead branches and leaves.

The finding of the grave and the corroboration of Fred's story by the boy was received by Mary with the calm

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with which the deer, worn out by the chase, receives the mortal blow. The last hope gone! Tearless, holding her feverish beating temples, she sought a lonely place to bury that last hope and to hide from the world the raging of the fierce battle within her. After hours of anguish a faint ray of hope found once more its way through the night of her despair! Was it not possible that the soldier who was buried with John was not Albert? Who had identified him? Clinging to this sweet delusion she fell asleep.

On the next morning the bodies were placed in the two coffins which had been procured from Springfield; before the final closing Fred asked Mary and Elma whether they wished to see the remains; both assented. At the appointed time, in company with their attendants and the widow and her son, the mourning girls approached the coffins. Elma took but one look at John's calm face, then

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fell upon her knees, asked his forgiveness and entreated him to wait for her.

Mary stood silently beside Albert's outstretched form; her eyes were centered upon his genial face which even death had failed to rob of its beauty.

Elma at last arose and fled to the carriage where the widow tried to comfort her as a mother would her child. Mary still remained at Albert's side; the landscape was bathed in the golden sunshine and beckoned her to live. Fred had anxiously watched her; not a tear dimmed her eyes; not a muscle seemed to move within her; she appeared like a marble statue watching death. Fred urged her to join Elma, told her that their country demanded her services, reminded her of a mother's love and anguish, and still she did not answer nor give a sign to indicate that she had heard him.

The silence became oppressive and

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unbearable to Fred. As he was in the act of leading her from the fatal spot, she turned to him and in a voice as sweet as a seraph's, said:

"Yes, Fred, your friend Albert is dead! God was jealous of him and called him home. Please leave me alone for an hour. I must decide within myself to whom I must pray or whom I must curse at such a sight."

Every one honored her wish and left. Fred turned once more toward the gloomy scene before the trees would hide the view, and saw Mary kneeling beside the coffin, lifting her hands to the heaven above.

Upon their return Mary was found dead beside her lover; her head lay on his breast; her face, now really angelic, showed no trace of pain; her left hand held two letters, one directed to Fred and the other to her mother; her right hand, touching her lover's forehead and

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eyes, still held the pencil with which the letters had been written.

“Mary, Mary!” cried Fred when he beheld the girl he worshipped in the awful majesty of death. He grasped her hands, from which the warmth of life had not yet flown, as if to tear her away from the dark abyss of death. Vain endeavor! In the agony of those moments he condemned Mary’s selfishness of having crossed to the other shore without him.

The letter to Fred was not sealed; it requested him to bury the lovers in the same coffin and in the same grave in which the two friends had been bedded, and to forward the letter directed to her mother to its destination. This was done. Fred, in addition, erected a monument upon the grave of the two lovers; he also gathered all the property which had been owned and left by Mary and together with a large sum of money

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forwarded them to Mrs. Graham, and then returned to the army with the intention of selling his life at the highest possible price.

Elma had John's remains sent to her home and buried upon her father's plantation. She had a modest mausoleum erected over his grave and made it the center of a small park which her two faithful servants cared for under her directions. She never married and yet she lived a useful life. With the tenacity of love's memory she recalled every conversation with her betrothed, every principle he had demonstrated and every ideal he had worshipped. Thus John's grave became to her the fountain of noble and great thoughts, which she fastened and molded in that sanctuary with the pen and scattered broadcast over the regenerated South.

Mrs. Graham received Mary's tear-stained letter, and for some time was un-

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able to comprehend its crushing contents; Lucy feared for her mother's reason during this trying time, until the strong woman, like hundreds and thousands of other mothers, accepted the inevitable for her country's sake. During the club's reunion in 1865, upon the urgent solicitation of its members to preserve the letter, she permitted it to be copied and a copy to be delivered to each member. The original letter was sacredly kept by her until her death, which occurred on Christmas day in the year 1902. When the dark messenger had spread its shadow over her noble face she requested the letter to be laid upon her bosom; soon thereafter, with a smile of welcome, as if Mary were standing on the distant brink of that dark river, the mother also crossed it.

The publication of the letter at the present time, nearly fifty years after Mary's death, should not be considered

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as a profane lifting of the veil which covers a stricken daughter's immortal love for her mother and the despair that drove a lovely and beloved girl to seek death as the last hope.

DEAREST MOTHER:—Albert's coffin serves me as a table while I am writing my farewell to the only being in this world who has a right either to condemn or to applaud my act. When your sweet, searching eyes read these lines your daughter will be cozily bedded with her lover in the bosom of Mother Earth. Do not be jealous, dearest Mother! It must be sweet to rest down there, away from all turmoil, hatred and murder. Oh! I am so weary of life! Your first-born has reached her goal. When Albert fell, my life was canceled. Had he died as the victim of disease I could have continued to live in the thought that he had paid the debt of nature. But he was murdered by his country which he loved so well! His uniform, now his shroud, is still stained with his precious blood!

No, Albert, your girl is coming! With the parting kiss you took her soul; now take her body also.

Farewell my dear, dear Mother! A wild desire seizes me to ask your forgiveness! I know you will forgive me. You would not force me to live without hope; to plod through the dreary desert before me, ever yearning for my lover's kind face, his soul-lit eyes and strong arms and never, never to find them above the sod!

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My sweet, sweet Mother! The earth is gliding from me! I press my lips upon your sacred name and, without pain, cross to the other shore to meet my lover. Farewell!

Your MARY.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REUNION

ON the morning of July 4, 1865, the old log house on the banks of the Mississippi wore a festive dress. Garlands of oak leaves, intertwined with flowers and ivy, decorated the venerable building, the birthplace of the club that bore its name.

A cozy cottage had been lately erected nearby, which, in connection with a small garden, was surrounded by a tasty and well-kept picket-fence. Mrs. Graham, the owner of the cottage, her daughter, Lucy, and Mr. Henry, the village postmaster, were standing in front of the log house engaged in conversation; suddenly they were disturbed by a whistle and the rumbling of a train. Lucy with her old-time zeal interrupted the two older persons by clapping her hands and ex-

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claiming, "The boys have come! The whole village is hurrying to the depot to receive them."

Yes, the boys have come, but not all of them! At that thought Mrs. Graham turned pale and fled to her room where, upon her knees, she wept bitterly. The sun, however, shone brightly, the birds were chirping their morning hymn and the crowd of villagers were joyfully welcoming the members of the "Log House Club" and accompanying them to the venerable building which the postmaster had named the cradle of the club.

Once more the spacious dining-room was thronged with the familiar faces, though changed by age, pain and suffering. The furniture had been kept intact in anticipation of this reunion. In the place of Hugo Brenner, the last presiding officer, Ralph Bowdoin was chosen president and Lucy Graham its secretary.

Ralph took the chair and suggested

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that the responses to the roll-call should be made sufficiently exhaustive as to show upon the company's book, for the benefit of the members and their relatives, the cause, place of death and burial of any member since deceased, and to name the nature of the sickness or wounds, if any, and where they had been received, of the living members. The president's suggestion was approved and the secretary was asked to call the roll.

Lucy arose to get the company's book that had been last used by Albert. She found it safely stowed away in Albert's wardrobe upstairs with other things belonging to the beloved dead. She made a short entry therein and then with a visible effort steadied her voice, brushed away the tears and read:

“John Gibson.”

“Killed in the battle of Wilson's Creek, and buried in Louisiana,” answered Fred.

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“Albert Burdett,” called the trembling girl, with a voice that seemed to issue through an ocean of tears.

“Killed in the battle of Wilson’s Creek and buried where he fell,” was Fred’s slow answer.

“Fred Lambert.”

“Present. Received three rifle-shot wounds, one in left shoulder and two in abdomen, at the battle of Wilson’s Creek, also a sabre cut in right arm at the battle of Gettysburg,” answered Fred.

“Byron Burns,” cried Lucy in a commanding tone that would have done justice to a corporal.

“Present, without having been wounded or sick,” responded Byron.

“Paul Gerard.”

“Wounded in the knee at the battle of Lookout Mountain,” answered the former law student, whose peculiar limping walk was now explained.

“Ralph Bowdoin.”

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"Miraculously escaped from fever, also had left ear shortened by rifle ball at the battle of Spottsylvania Court House," answered Ralph quite cheerfully. No one present had noticed Ralph's defective ear until this announcement was made, whereupon he received his comrades' congratulations for his narrow escape from instant death.

"Carl Kron."

"Killed in the battle of Mills Springs," answered Peter Ivan, who had been an eye-witness of Carl's death and his avenger in the fierce bayonet charge that had secured the victory for the Federals.

"Lou Johnson."

"Not heard from since the battle of Wilson's Creek, after which he was reported among the missing," answered Peter Ivan.

"Hugo Brenner."

"Died of malarial fever contracted among the southern swamps," answered

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the presiding officer, who had been treated in the same hospital for the same disease.

“Peter Ivan.”

“Present and unharmed,” responded the lucky Hungarian who had gone through an ordeal in the old world and another in the new without having received a scratch.

“Mrs. Graham.”

“Present,” answered the worthy matron, as all eyes were directed upon her careworn face.

“Mary Graham.” The secretary’s voice, while pronouncing her unfortunate sister’s name, was as soft as the touch with which the Angel of Death opens the portals of eternity to the centenarian.

“Killed by despair and buried at Wilson’s Creek with Albert Burdett,” answered Fred with an involuntary sigh and with his eyes shut as if he would thus blot from his memory the last tragical scene on that battle-field.

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“Lucy Graham,” called the secretary, thereby breaking the silence which, after the announcement of Mary’s death, lay like a stifling cloud upon those present.

“Here,” answered Lucy. Having carefully chronicled her answer she announced Carlo’s feat of saving the two children, also his death, and his burial in the village cemetery.

This announcement created a sensation. Every member related some remarkable act of Carlo’s, spoke of his faithfulness, of his forethought and cunning. The memory of him became even at that moment a blessing to his former masters and companions, since their united love, admiration and sympathy for him alleviated their grief for those sleepers in southern soil and cleared the atmosphere for the day’s festival. A resolution was then passed that Carlo’s death should be recorded like that of any other member.

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It was now eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Mrs. Graham invited the club to enjoy the next two hours in a social talk and in visiting the scenes of their former usefulness; admonishing them to return at one o'clock sharp and enjoy a family dinner as of old. In the distant city cannons were booming in recognition of the day. The new depot and station that had been built near the last grading done by the boys, was tastefully decorated and was carefully examined by them. They were welcomed by the depot agent in true Western style.

The people of the village greeted them with such genuine friendship that it brought tears to the eyes of the boys. Union flags floated everywhere. They raised over Rev. Gilbert's grave a beautiful flag and also decorated the grave of Harry Elwell's mother who had died the year before, believing that her son would

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soon return, although the people in the village knew that Harry had heroically died on the battle-field of Chancellorsville.

Punctually at one o'clock they returned to the log house. In entering they marveled at the remarkable change of the interior. The old dining-room had been profusely decorated with pictures, flowers and garlands, and the table was loaded with viands of the choicest kinds. While they were still admiring the pleasant changes in the familiar room, Rev. Colby entered from the adjoining room, followed by Mrs. Graham, Lucy, Mrs. Henry and daughter Anna, and a strange young lady, who, leaning on Mrs. Graham's shoulder, blushed and wept alternately. All were carefully dressed and their actions and features were as expectant as if some unusual event were about to happen.

Those of the members who were not

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in the confidence of the ladies were dumfounded at the strange spectacle, and viewed the proceedings as if they expected an enemy's battery to open fire on them at once. Yet no enemy was near. The reverend gentleman, whose snow-white hair formed a pleasing contrast to his smiling face, cheerfully remarked that on such a day of days something more than a waste of powder should be the order of the day; that the commemoration of the birth of this nation, since the grave for Slavery had been successfully dug, and the preparations for its final extinction and burial had been fully made, had a holier signification than heretofore, and that on such a day it would be eminently proper that the most sacred action of all the sacred actions of mankind should be performed, and that in this instance the fittest place for its performance would be the birthplace of those high

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ideals which the Log House Club had adopted and had scattered broadcast over the land.

The company seated themselves while the minister, like a patriarch of old, in a voice trembling with emotion, spoke of the large list of sacrifices that the club had made.

"Weep not," he continued, although his own eyes were moist; "from their graves, and from the graves of others like them, has at last arisen the Goddess of Liberty freed from the chains of slavery! The blood that was spent in the cleansing process is holy blood! Wherever the slain may be assembled, whether in the bosom of the ever generous Mother Earth or in the promised gorgeous labyrinth of heaven, they are happy and expect you to continue the fight of breaking the other fetters of mankind and yet ever jealously guard the liberty which their blood has aided

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to establish. Even the blood of Lincoln, whose only fault was his excess of love for humanity, like the blood of the One who demanded that we should love our enemies, was required to complete the victory. ‘It is done.’ The blood of the noblest of mankind has set the stamp of immortality upon Liberty and she will never die!”

“Farewell, brave comrades on the other shore,” the speaker exclaimed with a steadier voice, and pointing upwards, “and farewell also to you, sweet maid, who healed the wounds of others, but who bled to death from the wound a cruel fate had inflicted upon you. The wheel of progress demanded your blood to mingle with the hero blood of your brothers upon its journey through untold centuries and through jungles of vice and superstition! We ask you to bless our work to-day as we bless the

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work of Him whose ways we cannot fathom. Amen."

The "Amen" was repeated by those present and seemed to brighten the sad faces in the room.

The speaker then unfolded a paper which he held in his hand and asked the persons whose names were called to step forward. The excitement among the assembled friends was now intense; at this moment Mr. Henry, the postmaster, entered and was welcomed by the company.

The minister then called the names of the following persons, who placed themselves before him in the order named:

"Byron Burns and Lucy Graham."

"Paul Gerard and Anna Henry."

"Ralph Bowdoin and Ruth Burdett."

The minister turned to the rest of the company and asked them to serve as witnesses to the marriage of the three couples before them. All arose. The

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ceremony was performed, recorded in the company's book and duly acknowledged by the witnesses.

Mrs. Graham, before asking the company to be seated, explained to the uninitiated that upon her urgent request the contracting parties and their relatives had maintained a complete silence as to the coming events and asked to be forgiven for having withheld such interesting news from them.

"As we grow older," she added, "we are growing more cautious, more skeptical, if you please; for that reason I feared that if the intended union of these young people had been generally known some unforeseen event might have interfered and destroyed the realization of their wishes, as wishes of like importance, frequently expressed, have often been destroyed."

A general amnesty was cheerfully extended to Mrs. Graham and her allies,

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and many compliments were bestowed on all the ladies for the extraordinary feat of keeping such a secret for such a long time.

This pleasant exchange of civilities brought about a marked change in their conversation. Life with its duties and rewards asserted itself and demanded the sunshine of the living presence.

Encouraged by this change, Ralph Bowdoin introduced his wife, Albert's sister, Ruth, and informed them that she had been a nurse in a Federal hospital in the South to which Ralph had been conveyed as a doomed man, having contracted what was thought to be a hopeless case of malarial fever. The physicians had left him with the nurses without instructions. Ruth's special attention was directed to him by his calling her "Albert," when she was leaning over him to arrange his pillow. Thinking of her brother and his friends and

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that the invalid might be a member of the famed club of which Albert had written her, she gave him the closest attention. He fully recovered, notwithstanding the physician's death sentence, and before leaving the hospital he made the fair Ruth an offer to dedicate his life to her, which dedication was accepted.

The blushing bride, as beautiful in her modesty as she was in her features and form, fled to Mrs. Graham, who embraced her and called her daughter.

Paul Gerard now introduced his wife as the postmaster's pretty daughter. He asserted that ever since she, as her father's deputy, had delivered to him a long looked-for letter from his mother, there had been an unwritten contract between them that some day he would come and ask her to be his wife, and that this contract, during the war, had been put in writing and properly signed.

Byron Burns was also compelled to

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betray some of the secrets of his courtship. He introduced his wife, Lucy Graham, as his former pupil in algebra, who could not comprehend the wisdom and possibility of taking something from nothing, and who had, as a special condition, made him pledge to strike that study from the family's bill of intellectual fare before she would speak the decisive word.

Further complications were cut off by the command of dinner; the company gathered around the familiar table, at which Rev. Colby occupied the seat of honor. The conversation during the meal was more fascinating than the delicacies of the table, although the latter were excellent. The reminiscences from the past life of the club and the soldiers' life in camp and battle, together with the interesting remarks by Rev. Colby and the ladies, presented a wonderful variety of entertainment.

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Before closing the eventful festival with a short prayer, Rev. Colby expressed himself with great satisfaction at the extraordinary results of the workings of the club, which had manifested themselves chiefly in the pointed and condensed narratives of personal events in which the respective speakers had taken a part. He attributed this gentlemanly instinct to the observance of the "Golden Rule," which prohibits the lengthy, therefore tedious and deadening, parading of such narratives before a suffering audience, but which encourages the condensed expressions of facts in order to create a revival of other facts and ideas, which, if related briefly and to the point, thus leaving their vital powers intact, will lead to moments in life that are never forgotten, and that, even in the remote future, may enrich other moments and become the germs of noble and great deeds.

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Upon Mrs. Graham's invitation the members of the club met at her cottage on the next morning.

Ralph Bowdoin had accepted a position as an assistant agent at the village railway station and was to share the cottage with Mrs. Graham and Ruth, his wife. A strange, passionate love had seized Mrs. Graham for Ruth, who closely resembled Albert and whose actions reminded her of Mary.

Byron Burns and Lucy were to leave for a distant state in which Byron had accepted a professorship in the higher mathematics. Lucy, at the final parting, threw herself into her mother's arms and declared she would never have consented to leave her if Ruth had not pledged herself to take Mary's place.

Paul Gerard and his bride were to leave for Paul's old home where his parents and a partnership in a lucrative law practice awaited him.

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Fred Lambert, formerly the merriest of all, was now the saddest. Upon Mrs. Graham's question how she could ever repay him, he answered, by giving her Mary's picture and the ribbon she wore on the day the club left for the war. Both were given him.

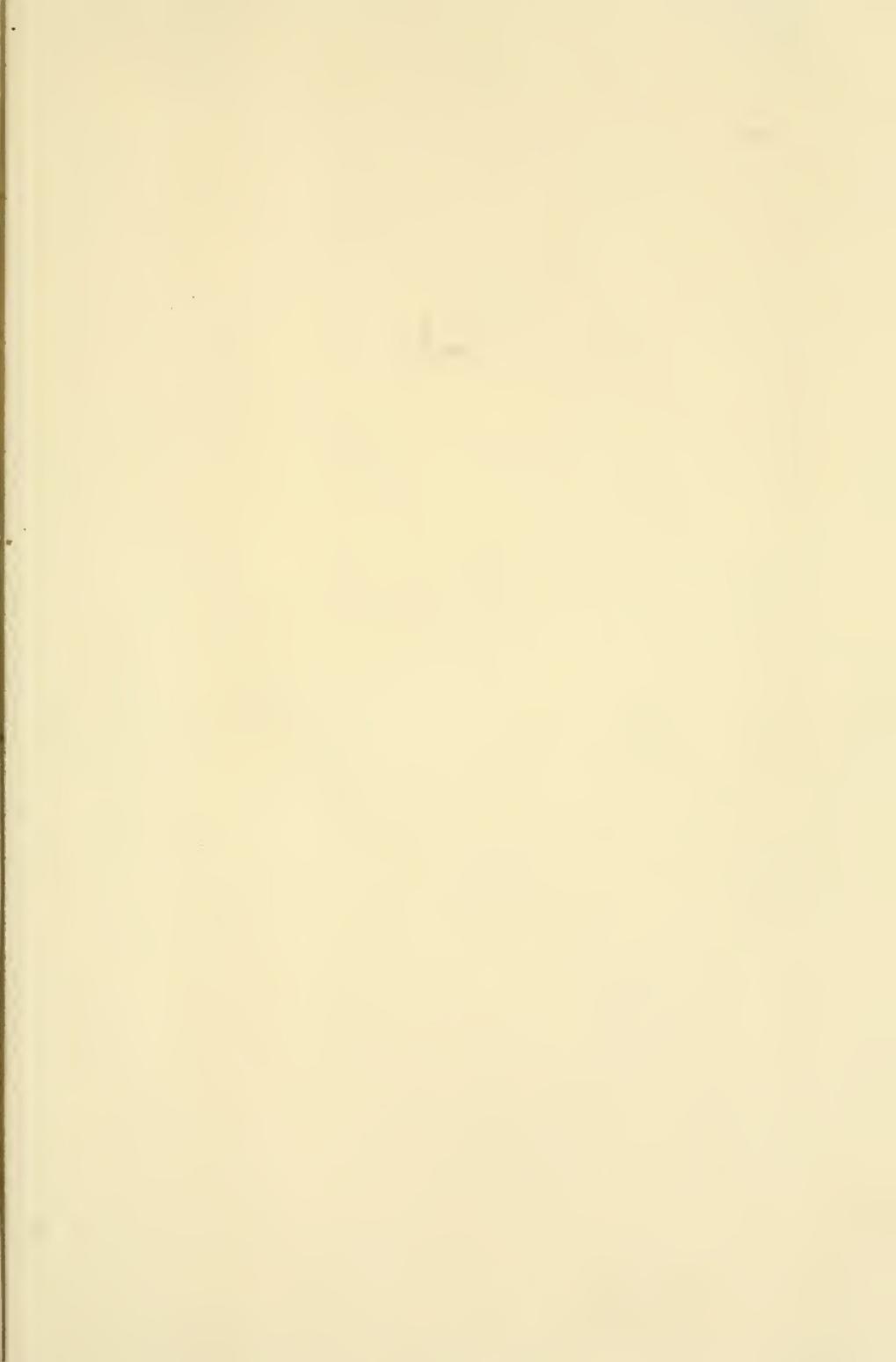
The other members scattered as yet aimlessly over the Republic which they had helped to save.

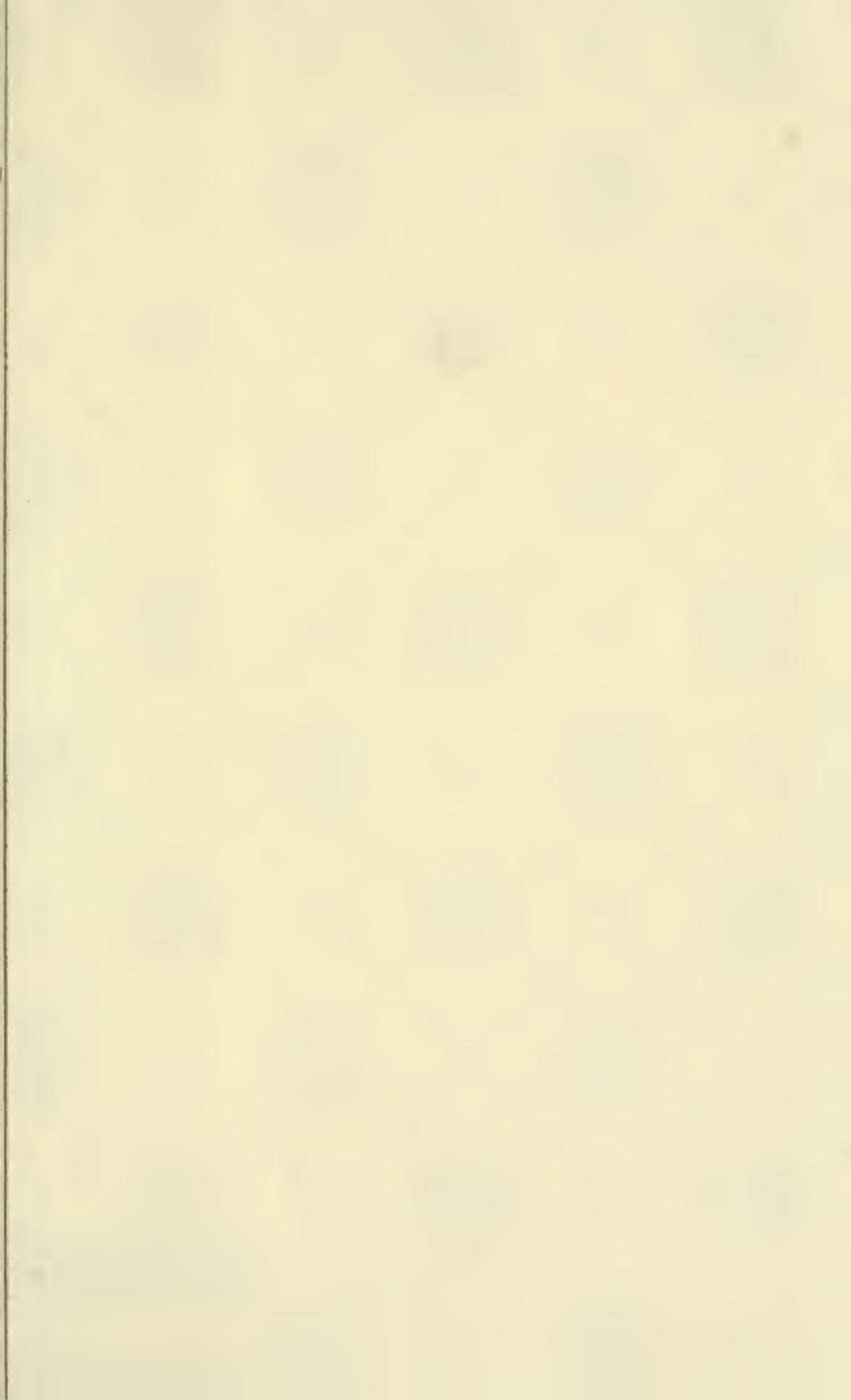
At noon on the next day the whole village turned out for a general hand-shaking with the departing members of the club and wished them Godspeed on their second journey. A beautiful wreath, encircling the words "The Log House Club," had been fastened to the smoke-stack of the engine of their train on which the members were to leave. A special car, also decorated, had been provided for them. When the signal to start was given and the train slowly began to move, the village church choir

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of 1861 began singing the national hymn and the throng of people joined at once in the grand old song, while their friends on the train, remembering the parting of years ago, stood at the windows of the car, waving their handkerchiefs, and mourning for their dead comrades of bygone days.

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